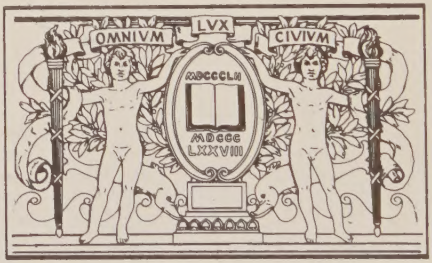

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AS I LIKE IT

SECOND SERIES

BY

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

LAMPSON PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT YALE

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

NEW YORK · LONDON

1924

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TO MY FRIEND

ROBERT BRIDGES

EDITOR OF "SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE"

Ten thousand thousand precious Gifts
My Daily Thanks employ,
Nor is the least a chearful Heart,
That tastes those Gifts with Joy.

—Joseph Addison, in *The Spectator*,
9 August 1712.

PREFACE

These articles appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* from September 1923 to August 1924. I have made very few changes as the book is composed of monthly chronicles. Some of the subjects, however, are of eternal interest. The hospitable reception given to the First, has emboldened me to publish the Second Series.

W. L. P.

Yale University,
Tuesday, 2 September 1924.

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I

In the *New Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, which are appearing in *Scribner's Magazine*, and which constitute one of the greatest "finds" in modern literature, there is an enthusiastic tribute to Thomas Carlyle. The young Scot had just been reading Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*, and he writes: "I subscribe to that essay. My own is quite unnecessary. Do read it, it will do you good; it would do the dead good. It has reminded me once again of the great mistake of my life—and of everybody else's; that we are all trying to gain the whole world if you will, except what alone is worth keeping; our own soul. God bless T. Carlyle, say I."

I am frequently informed that there is to-day a "reaction" against Carlyle—"nobody reads him." From the literary point of view, it would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that those who do not read him are nobodies. I am not sure whether it is wise or not to follow the fashions in clothes; but I am quite sure that it is folly to follow the fashions in reading. Read what is good for stimulating and for refreshing the mind; and leave book-fads to others. They have their reward. Goethe instantly recognised that Carlyle was a moral force; such inspiring energy is needed even to-day. I remember in *Tom Brown at Oxford* the fine compliment paid to the new book, *Past and Present*, how eagerly the under-

graduates were reading it, and what a powerful influence it exerted on their young lives.

There is this to be said for the average undergraduate: one may lament his apparent absorption in athletics, in societies, in student politics, his appalling waste of precious time; he at all events is a shrewd critic of men, he despises insincerity in his elders, he instantaneously detects a false note in teaching and preaching, and, whatever may be his outer aspect, he responds, both in art and in morals, to inspiration. No wonder the Oxford men were stirred and shaken by Carlyle; if you put flame to powder, something is bound to happen.

When I was eighteen I read Froude's *Life of Carlyle*. I well remember the evening when I lit the gas, and sat down to the new book, having no conception of the tremendous influence it was going to exert on my life. *Through the thick night I heard the trumpet blow.*

A year later, when I was a freshman at Yale, a member of the last class taught by Cyrus Northrop before his translation to the presidency of the University of Minnesota, he informed us that every pupil must select some literary essay, and read aloud to the division a synopsis of the same. I had never read *Heroes and Hero Worship*, and I chose for my "effort" the chapter called *The Hero as a Man of Letters*. I chose this because I thought it would be good for me. It was.

There are certain spiritual experiences in our

lives which we would not have missed for anything. They are worth more to us than years of ordinary existence. In an hour the soul rises to a higher plane, and, despite temporary lapses, one can never live again on the lower level. The mind leaps to an elevation. That afternoon in my room on the top floor of old North Middle, as I absorbed *The Hero as a Man of Letters*, I was in an ecstasy. There is no other word for it. The pages of the book seemed to be aflame, and the fire consumed me utterly. When I came to read my paper in the classroom, the spell was still upon me. I trembled with excitement, and could hardly read the words I had written. Professor Northrop, who had probably expected a perfunctory report, looked at me with surprise. His talent for ironical comment had made him a terror both to slackers and to sloppers; if he had chilled my enthusiasm with his famous icy disdain, I should never have forgiven him. But apparently he saw that my all but uncontrollable emotion was genuine; that I was really under the domination of the genius of Carlyle. I have not forgotten his brief but emphatic word of commendation.

I therefore echo Stevenson's exclamation—"God bless T. Carlyle." We must forever be grateful to those persons and to those works of art that have stimulated our minds.

Nearly every day I receive a letter concerning English grammar or good usage. A physician in

the Gowanda State Hospital, at Collins, New York, writes: "While I agree unqualifiedly with your strictures on mathematics, I beg to inquire if the usage is now mathematics *are* instead of, as formerly, *is?*" My answer is that words like mathematics, athletics, politics may properly be followed either by the singular or the plural verb. In a poem by Browning, published in 1855, he wrote:

> Mathematics are your pastime.

In all languages there are some expressions that are simply matters of taste, like the gender of the French word for *afternoon*. By the way, I have never received from anyone a satisfactory answer to this question: What determines the gender of a new word in the French language?

A Brown alumnus from Arlington, Massachusetts, writes me the following interesting letter: "Do we not greatly need a word as a common pronoun in the third person singular number to take the place of *he*, *his*, *him*, *she*, *her*, etc., as in 'If anyone wishes to see me let ? come forward'? You probably recall Ella Flagg Young's futile, if not absurd, attempt with 'hiser, himer,' etc. [I do not.] I suggest the word *e*. As 'If anyone wishes to see me let *e* come forward.' *E* is the only vowel—the one most used—that is not a word. *A* and *I* and *O* are words. Why not *e* with all its merits? And especially since we *need* it? How easily it would glide into use if presented by a persuasive tongue and pen!"

This suggestion is ingenious, but will hardly command universal assent. In the first place, it is not necessary, for the masculine does well enough by implication; secondly, *e* spoken would sound either like bad grammar spoken with a Cockney accent, or as if the speaker were trying to imitate Thomas Hardy's Wessex shepherds.

A letter from Honduras suggests that instead of using *n'est-ce pas* or *amt I*, or any other expression, we adopt a literal translation of the Spanish *verdad*. Some have suggested *yes* and others *no*. But practically all are agreed that there exists a vacancy which should be filled.

My engineer from Honduras continues: "I wonder if you dislike the expression 'in the public prints'? I do hope so, for then perhaps you would include it in your select list of special literary bounders." I do not think I have seen this very often, but I hereby confer upon it my official damnation. All those who on and after this date use it are excommunicated. It is, as my correspondent says, sufficiently banal.

I have been pleased by the general interest in the use of good English, and by an accompanying determination to help in raising the standard. None of us is daily accurate, and there is probably no book on English grammar or speech that is itself free from error. A theologian from California writes, "I found 33 errors in A. S. Hill's *Rhetoric*, errors in Herbert Spencer's *Philosophy of Style*, Trench's *On the Study of*

Words, Richard Grant White's *Every Day English*, Dean Alford's *The Queen's English*, etc."

If gold rusts, what shall iron do? Iron must improve. An extremely useful book has just been published, in pocket size, yet containing over 350 pages in clear type. It is called *Constructive English: An Aid to Effective Speaking and Writing*. The author is Francis Kingsley Ball. This handy volume contains decisions on all kinds of doubtful cases, lists of words commonly mispronounced, and many exercises in punctuation. It ought to have an enormous circulation.

I am often asked, What is the best treatise on the art of writing English—where the aim is not so much to give elementary instruction in grammar and punctuation, but to assist those who wish to write not only correctly but persuasively, elegantly, artistically, creatively? My answer is Barrett Wendell's *English Composition*. This book came out of the author's long experience as a teacher of advanced pupils at Harvard. It is a good illustration of its precepts, for it is written with grace, vivacity, and charm; it is steadily interesting. It is the only book on rhetoric that I ever succeeded in reading straight through.

A librarian from Cleveland writes, referring to *Casey*, that she has an Anthology of Baseball Verse nearly ready. She remarks that few novels and short stories mention baseball. "There is a game in Harry Leon Wilson's *Bunker Bean*

and a pitcher in Mary Watts's *The Rudder*. I don't recall any other novel which mentions such a game."

Now there must be many. When I was a boy, there appeared a long list of novels uniformly bound, called the *No-Name Series*, because they were anonymous. I read them all, and I particularly well remember one—*The Great Match*—which dealt with baseball. I remember even the hero, Dick, and the villain, Ned Black, who tried to sell out the game, and was foiled by Dick, who had indulged in secret practice.

Mary S. Watts is a truthful and accurate American realistic novelist. *The Rudder* is a good story, but perhaps her best is *The Rise of Jennie Cushing*. Her books are too free from exaggeration, caricature, and sensationalism to please the crowd, either natives or foreigners, who demand something more racy or more emphatic; but they are so true that taken together they constitute a trustworthy history of manners.

Sometimes I think that our American woman novelists are more accurate and more honest in their presentments of life than their masculine colleagues. Edith Wharton, Anne Sedgwick, Zona Gale, Dorothy Canfield, Elsie Singmaster, Mary Watts, Willa Cather seem to have as their aim to tell the truth. On this difficult target their percentage of hits is high.

Yale University, which was the first academic institution to give an honorary degree to Benjamin Franklin, Mark Twain, James Whitcomb

Riley, has once more honoured itself in being the first to bestow the degree of Doctor of Letters on Edith Wharton. No one could possibly question the wisdom of this choice. The artistic distinction of her work is so generally recognised that she has become a world figure. That even the foremost writers appreciate university recognition may be seen from the fact that Mrs. Wharton left her pleasant home in France and a half-written novel to come to New Haven and receive the degree, even as Mark Twain travelled to Oxford. Had she known in advance what was to be the terrific heat of that commencement day, would she have come? On the commencement stage that morning, I lost three pounds.

In talking with Mrs. Wharton, a memorable experience for me, she told me that her translation of Sudermann's play *Es Lebe das Leben*, made long ago, continues to enjoy a steady sale. In my opinion, no living writer has been more unjustly treated by the critics than Hermann Sudermann. The acclaim with which his earliest plays were greeted soon turned into detraction and abuse. Much of this came, no doubt, from those who had failed in the attempt to do what he did so well; but that by no means expresses it all. I shall have more to say on this subject when I discuss in a later issue his recently published autobiography. It has been translated into English.

I have been reading the latest book by Ed-

mund Gosse, called *More Books on the Table*, containing forty-one short familiar talks on literature, ranging over a wide field. The accomplished critic discusses Housman, Rostand, Beowulf, Akenside, Edwin Abbey, Leigh Hunt, Browning, Edgar Lee Masters, and others. All of these brief essays are sprightly and entertaining, and written with that good taste, good temper, moderation, and fundamental common sense that have generally been characteristic of the author. Mr. Gosse is an admirable critic; it is only when he is called an eminent scholar that I am forced to express dissent. He is frequently spoken of in English books and periodicals as a man of profound learning. I remember reading this phrase: "Mr. Gosse has pre-empted the eighteenth century," as though somehow that field had become his preserve. He himself has never made any such claim, nor has he ever adopted a pontifical attitude. Critical ability is one thing and scholarship another; from the purely scholarly point of view, Mr. Gosse's books are both inadequate and inaccurate. A very learned English scholar, and one not given to exaggeration or over-emphasis, wrote me that he had gleaned more misinformation from the works of Mr. Gosse than from any other writer, ancient or modern.

This talent for inaccuracy—for that is what it amounts to—does not affect his standing as a critic. He has written much valuable and subtle criticism, has awakened, stimulated, and di-

rected many readers. His best qualities appear in *More Books on the Table.* I am particularly glad that he denounced the publisher's puff on the paper jacket of Edgar Lee Masters's *Domesday Book,* for which, of course, the American author was not responsible. It is worth quoting as a horrible example: "For startling originality . . . it should rank among the masterpieces of the world." Mr. Gosse's feelings on reading such a pronouncement were quite natural: "This embarrassing violence nearly prevented me from opening the book."

My own custom is to tear off the paper jacket of a new book before reading it, as I do not wish to start with an adverse prejudice. If there must be a jacket—and there are some readers who read the book with the jacket on, just as there are some persons who keep all their books behind glass doors—it should contain only a fair statement of the nature and purpose of the volume, without any puffery whatsoever. It may be that there are unintelligent readers who are impressed by the loud superlatives on the outside, and who are thus led to buy the thing, for there are still many who believe everything they see in print; but I am sure that in one important aspect the puffery is a disservice to the author. I refer to the book reviewers. There is no doubt that the average reviewer, when he sees the book labelled fulsomely, immediately makes up his mind to slate it. His feeling is natural enough. The book has been sent to him for review, and

he does not care to be told by anybody what he must say about it.

No judge likes to have his decision anticipated, especially by a party who is interested. Yet how frequently we see the batsman with three balls called throw away his bat, start confidently and cockily toward first base on the next ball pitched, only to hear from the lips of the umpire the fateful word *Strike!* An elementary knowledge of human nature should prevent the attempted forcing of another's hand. Puffery on the jacket is practically just that and usually meets with a result that ought to have been foreseen.

The position I took on books for children, that the best books for children were those not written for them, receives powerful support from a teacher in Rutherford, New Jersey, who writes:

"A nine-year-old boy belonging to me began five years ago to devote his attention to my copy of *Pilgrim's Progress*, which is fully illustrated with full-page coloured pictures. The story he got by asking what the pictures meant. The book now is entirely out of its binding, but its charm has not fled. The same is true of the copy of *Gulliver's Travels*. Possibly the story there came to him better than in the other. If it were read to him as written, with sentences broken by references to the Bible, it would not have held his interest, but it does when given as a story. Children sometimes like books better when they browse about as they will than when

too much is told them, don't you think? As teacher, I found children liking better such poems as extracts from *Vision of Sir Launfal* than poems written for them. They are not given good things and so must be satisfied with inferior and stunted mentally by what they have been fed for thought."

The latest member of the Fano Club is Mrs. John Meigs, who for many years has exercised a deep influence at the Hill School, and who has always been an enthusiastic student of Browning. She wrote on the picture post-card while sitting directly in front of the famous painting in the church of Saint Augustine at Fano, and as the card bears the Fano post-mark, she is now a life-member of the exclusive Fano Club, and entitled to all its rights and privileges. I am certain that the club will receive a number of accessions during this present summer of 1923, and I may eventually have to establish a waiting list, the moral of which threat is too evident to need elaboration.

It is good news that we are to have a complete translation in English of the works of the Russian novelist Gogol, who, like so many other men of genius, entered the world in the year of Our Lord 1809. That was the *annus mirabilis*, not only of the nineteenth century, but of human history. In 1809 were born Darwin, Lincoln, Tennyson, Gladstone, Poe, Gogol, Chopin, Men-

delssohn, FitzGerald, Holmes, and some other distinguished persons whose names I cannot at this moment remember.

Great translators are rarer than great creative authors; the necessary combination of qualities being seldom united in one individual. Constance Garnett seems to have them all. The family to which she belongs is sufficiently remarkable. Doctor Richard Garnett, who for many years was an official at the British Museum, illuminated a wide range of subjects with his knowledge, wisdom, humour, and information. His son, Edward Garnett, the husband of Constance, is a literary critic of high standing and of international reputation; and their son has made a sensation with his first book, *Lady into Fox.* I wonder if he got the idea from Browning's poem *White Witchcraft?* Look it up for yourself and make your own conjecture. Whatever may be thought of *Lady into Fox,* whether it be taken as a piece of light drollery or as a profound satire, it is written in a style so exquisite that we may confidently greet the young man as an important addition to contemporary letters. If ever prophecy were justified, it would seem to be in this happy instance.

Constance Garnett has translated the novels and tales of Turgenev, who is perhaps the greatest artist in the history of prose fiction; the short stories of Chekhov, and has begun to translate his plays; the novels of Dostoevski, and some of the works of Tolstoi; and now we are to

have also the writings of Gogol. Her capacity for work is almost as remarkable as its excellence. I am frankly amazed at the rapid succession of translations that proceed from her workroom. I could not understand it at all, were it not for the fact that she suffers from weak eyes. Nothing inspires effort like an obstacle. An enormous amount of first-rate scholarly work has been accomplished by men and women who could hardly see; just as nothing makes for longevity like having heart-disease.

Although Pushkin was the founder of modern Russian literature both in poetry and prose, Gogol was emphatically a germinal writer. His short story, which has been translated as *The Overcoat*, *The Cloak*, *The Mantle*, has had more effect on the course of Russian fiction than any other work or event. Any one may see this for himself by comparing it with Dostoevski's first book, *Poor People*. Gogol's long novel, *Dead Souls*, often infelicitously likened to the manner of Dickens, is good only in spots. It has many pages that are insufferably dull, but is worth reading for the others, which are indeed quite otherwise. His masterpiece is unquestionably the short novel, *Taras Bulba*, which one will read in two hours, and remember for a lifetime. In that astounding tale, which combines lyric brevity with epic breadth, one gets all the effect of the leviathans of Sienkiewicz.

In addition to producing in a few years a pioneer short story, a long novel, a heroic romance,

Gogol wrote the best "regular" play in the Russian language, *Revizor*, sometimes translated as *The Inspector General*. Although this has always been a favourite on the Continental stage —I saw an excellent performance in Munich— the first time it was ever produced in English was by the students of Yale University. Wholly Russian in characters and scene, the theme is universal—for it deals with political graft.

The other day I was talking with my friend, Professor Theodore Woolsey, and he said, "Why don't you comment on the greatest novel ever written, *The Deluge*, by Sienkiewicz?" I am sure that hundreds of my readers can remember the excitement caused in the 'nineties by the appearance of the Polish historical romances; an excitement that became a frenzy on the publication of *Quo Vadis?* I have often wished that he had never written the Roman story, because the glamour of its notoriety outshone his finer work. Let me insist that the Polish trilogy, *With Fire and Sword*, *The Deluge*, and *Pan Michael*, are just as gloriously inspiring reading in 1923 as they were when everybody was talking about them. They have ceased to become fashionable, but they have not ceased to be works of genius.

If by these few words I could induce some members of the present younger generation to begin reading these magnificent books, I should have the satisfaction of adding to their lives a

source of happiness and an influence permanently fruitful.

I am glad that the publishers have included in the Modern Student's Library *American Prose Masters*, by W. C. Brownell, so that this important critical work is at last available in a popular edition. Mr. Brownell is our leading American critic. He has experience, scholarship, training, and a wide acquaintance with ancient and modern literature and art. Although some will dissent from all the conclusions reached by Mr. Brownell, and all will dissent from some of them, no one can read these essays on American authors without receiving both illumination and stimulation. The six writers discussed are Cooper, Hawthorne, Emerson, Poe, Lowell, Henry James. On its publication in 1909 the volume at once took its place as a notable addition to American criticism, and it is well to have it reissued at a price that places it within the reach of all.

One of the world-centres of the study of the life and works of Robert Browning is Baylor University, at Waco, Texas. Thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Professor A. Joseph Armstrong, the university has acquired an exceedingly valuable collection of Browning books, manuscripts, pictures, and other memorabilia. The latest publication to issue from this source is of almost sensational interest. It is a hand-

some volume containing the *Letters of Robert Browning to Miss Isa Blagden*, which fill over two hundred pages. The original manuscript was bought by members of the senior class (1923) at Waco. The letters have been arranged for publication by Professor Armstrong, and are here printed for the first time. It is unnecessary to comment on their value to students of the poet.

In sharp contrast to the importance of this publication there has just appeared in England a biographical work on Browning, by Frances M. Sim. It is both surprising and unfortunate that such a book should have been published. It is called *Robert Browning: the Poet and the Man*, and deals with his early years, from 1833 to 1846. Not only is there nothing important in it to justify its publication, but it is a veritable comedy of errors. It is difficult to say which is its more striking characteristic—its crudity of style or its chronic inaccuracy. As an illustration of style—"Shelley was his worship at the time of writing *Pauline*." "The love-story of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett is embalmed in Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese!*" Inaccuracies: Byronic *Weltz-Schmart;* Dante's *Purgatoria; La Belle Sans Merci;* while an alleged quotation from a work on psychology by James Rowland Angell is assigned to "Herbert Angell, Professor Psychology, University of Chicago." Quotations from Browning and Shakespeare are not only fre-

quently inaccurate, but seem to indicate that our biographer has no ear.

Says Shakespeare:

> The sounds of music soft stillness in the night,
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.

From *Pauline:*

> Andromeda with eyes upturned, secure some God
> To save will come in thunder from the stars.

The only "contribution" in the book is the suggestion that Browning wrote the hymn, *Nearer, My God, to Thee*, for which there is no evidence. I have read many inaccurate and silly books on Browning, but this outclasses them all.

II

My remarks on librarians drew a considerable number of letters from men and women practising that admirable profession. A gentleman from Pennsylvania writes: "I agree with you. . . . But there are not enough of them in this world. Many are qualified for the profession, but few indulge in it. Why is this? I think the main reason . . . is due to the fact that it does not offer high enough financial return. 'The starving bookseller' is a common expression and disheartens those interested in books and their circulation."

I am sure that a world with more librarians in it would be a better world than this; and I am sure that their services do not receive sufficient financial compensation. I enquired about this matter of Andrew Keogh, one of the most distinguished librarians in America, and he replied: "There is no doubt that there is a dearth of librarians, at least of librarians of the proper kind, and I feel quite sure that the low salaries have a good deal to do with this. The salaries paid to teachers in the public schools are higher than those paid in public libraries to people of the same education and length of experience, and the salaries of teachers are really higher because they work only nine months in the year.

In some cases teachers are entitled to a pension, while public librarians have nothing of this sort to look forward to, as a rule. In the college and university library the same thing is true. The library staff has to work eleven months of the year, which means that they have no opportunity to write or study or travel, and they do not, as a rule, get the same salary as those on the teaching side. It is true that many assistants in college and university libraries have not the education required of teachers, but those who have are still in many places employed at a lower salary than if they had gone into teaching."

Well, this should be reformed altogether. I did not know that there was any educated group, always excepting ministers of the gospel, who received lower salaries than teachers in the public schools. The men and women who teach in primary, secondary, and high schools, and who are perhaps more responsible for the future citizenship of the country than any other class, have always been inadequately paid; this kind of preparedness has never appealed to those who distribute public funds. If librarians are still worse off, I am sorry for them, and sorrier for the cities and villages in which they work. Both teachers and librarians are yet in a better position than ministers, for, no matter how small the salary may be, they actually receive it; whereas with Christian ministers, the smaller the salary, the less likely they are to get it. A pastor of a big

city church receives his cheque regularly; a pastor in a small village, who often has several churches to manage, has to beg for his income. So true is this that a little while ago, when a committee called on the pastor of a small church and informed him they were going to raise his salary, he exclaimed: "Don't you do that! it takes all my time to go out and collect what I have now."

It is amusing to see the constant attacks made on churches as "bulwarks of wealth and privilege," when the majority of them are composed of members who are poor.

A short time ago I saw in New York an interesting play by Tom Cushing and Winchell Smith, called *Thank You*, alluding to the fact that the average minister has to live on tips. The driving idea of this comedy is that ministers should be so well paid that their status would be more than respectable—their position should be so dignified as to be at least on a level with that of the squire. The minister should be so far above sordid cares that he would be able to devote his entire time to the spiritual needs of the community, and receive from his neighbours the respect always given in this funniest of all possible worlds to any one who lives in luxury. Now the Catholic Church takes care of its clergy; a priest is the leader of his flock, and is seldom regarded by outsiders as contemptible. You remember in that brilliant novel by Harold Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware*, the

dramatic contrast between the powerful Father Forbes and the miserable Methodist minister? Well, then, read it. It is as striking a comparison as that between Bishop Blougram and Gigadibs, in Browning's poem.

To see a play in the theatre advocating the raising of ministers' salaries has an oddity all its own.

There is no doubt that those whose time is mainly given to public service are conspicuously underpaid, and while it is essential that librarians, teachers, and preachers should receive more money—because able men and women must be attracted to these callings, and because no man can do his work efficiently if he lives in chronic financial worry—still I think it is well that these three professions should never be on a cash level with the law, engineering, and business. The element of personal sacrifice is more necessary to success than the possibility of any material gain. When I hear people say indignantly, "The successful librarian, teacher, or preacher should be paid exactly as much as the successful lawyer, manufacturer, or engineer," I smell a fallacy. It is essential that he who enters one of those three public service professions should be actuated chiefly by a never-dying zeal to help mankind. Give, and not get, is the eternal distinction between service and personal ambition.

Not for a moment do I mean to imply that business men are morally inferior. It is the man and not the job that counts the most.

Public servants could never live at all were it not for the generosity of men of affairs. Librarians do not build libraries; doctors do not build hospitals; professors do not build colleges; ministers do not build churches. These institutions are erected by devoted, unselfish, and successful business men. But the impelling motive driving any man or woman into a profession of service should never be security, ease, social standing, or luxury. There is no particular danger that it ever will be.

The danger is all the other way. I remember a statement in a book by the late Professor Albert E. Hancock, of Haverford, whose tragic death was a public misfortune. A young assistant professor, who was vainly endeavouring to support a wife and child on an inadequate salary, was asked what particular original work he had in hand. He answered: "I have only one ambition. That is to pay my bills. I have ceased to take the slightest interest in any form of scholarship. My time and energy are devoted to meeting living expenses. That is *my* original work." This is neither an imaginary nor an isolated tragedy.

To return to librarians. I received a witty letter from a young Boston librarian, who playfully objects to my calling her and her colleagues *harmless*. I admit that the word has an unfortunate connotation, but I meant it only as a compliment. Every one secretly likes to be regarded as formidable, and *harmless* sounds tame.

But when I think of the large amount of damage wrought by individuals who are not technically guilty of crime, I think that to say librarians are the most harmless of all people is to praise them. I mean they are positively, aggressively harmless.

Every one secretly likes to be regarded as formidable; and if it is any comfort to librarians, let me confess that, so far as I can remember, no man, woman, or child has ever been afraid of me. This is, as the world goes, a humiliating admission; for many believe that not to inspire fear is a sign of incurable weakness. *En revanche*, I find that with advancing years I progressively lose fear of others; I grow less and less afraid of human beings. There are some things, however, I will not do; I never open letters in the evening, and I will not answer the telephone after I have gone to bed. President Eliot once told me that every night at nine o'clock he "killed" the telephone, and restored it to activity at seven the next morning. This explains why he has lived to be eighty-nine years old.

The librarian of the United States Veterans' Bureau Hospital 80, Fort Lyon, Colorado, neatly catches me in an egregious and unpardonable error, and all I can do is to cry *Peccavi!* She writes: "It is heartening indeed, and highly stimulating, to have the dignity and usefulness of our calling so recognised. If permitted a paraphrase, I'd say, 'For this belief much thanks.' . . . Of course it's a busy life this being mousy, abstaining from profanity and lynch-

ings, keeping out of jail generally. However, some of us in this harmless profession have found time to read enough to know our Keats from our breakfast food. Hence we are led to wonder, on reading to the end of your article, in what edition of the *Grecian Urn* you find 'Heard *songs* are sweet,' etc. True, Keats might have sacrificed rhythm to alliteration—but did he? He might have said 'Heard *songs*' instead of 'Heard *melodies*'—but did he? Has your harmless librarian a special edition or are you putting it, as John Weaver would, 'in American'? We may be wrong, but we think we have the cards. As our boys say, 'We call your Keats—what you got?'"

What have I got? I am nine-spot high. Only I did not intend to bluff, and I am sorry I came in. The accursed propensity to alliteration was what made me misquote. The worst of it is that this is not my only offence. In recent years I have repeatedly quoted that phrase from memory and have invariably said *songs* instead of *melodies*. It makes one perfectly rhythmical pentameter line, but my correspondent is wrong in saying Keats might have said *songs*. He could not; for in that poem he would never have used anything but the perfect word.

I am almost glad of my humiliation because it drew so jolly a letter, and because it saved me from continuing in sin. I therefore glory in my shame. Let me say now that any corrections of errors in these articles will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged. This does not re-

fer to indiscriminate abuse. Faithful are the wounds of an enemy, for the victim recognises the sincerity of the intention; but they require no acknowledgment.

Alliteration led me into that crime against Keats. When Professor Scripture was teaching psychology at Yale, he made tests on a large number of individuals, with the result that he proved that the average man, both in writing and in speaking, falls instinctively into alliteration. The problem of the poet is not to alliterate, but to avoid it. Alliteration precedes rhyme.

Swinburne's

> With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain

is undoubtedly deliberate, but I think the following line from Browning was unstudied.

> Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed for God?

A correspondent from Pasadena suggests that my sentence, "The reason why the supremacy in this game has passed, etc.," would be better without the word *why*. I agree with him. Yet my sentence is not incorrect. *Why* is there a relative adverb, and the clause with which it begins is not an adverb clause, but an adjective clause, modifying the noun *reason*. See that excellent work, *Constructive English*, by Francis K. Ball.

A musician from Asheville, North Carolina, gives me some interesting reflexions on the word

accompanist. "I am repeatedly subjected to the hearing of breakneck attempts at its pronunciation. Why on earth people try to make it a hard word to pronounce is beyond my ken. Simply because the verb 'accompany' has a y at the end, they insist on saying 'accompanyist' —and I've heard many a gallant attempt to pronounce it with casual speed end disastrously. The noun does not boast a y. Therefore, 'y' will some people insist on its inclusion? The word *accompanist* is simple and easy."

She is undoubtedly right; and I hope this advertisement will bring relief to many. Still, the word *accompanyist* occurs in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, but it is obsolescent and the sooner it dies the better. I like the story of the alcoholic musician who was accosted by the policeman with the remark, "See here, you'll have to accompany me." "All right, old man; what's the key?"

My Asheville correspondent is distressed to see the words *farther* and *further* used indifferently. As an illustration of accuracy she writes, "Seated on a fallen log, they discussed the matter further before walking farther." She condemns Edith Wharton for not observing the distinction. As a matter of fact, the distinction has become outlawed, and it is not incorrect to use either word for the other. But it would be well if we could observe the finest shades. Finally she condemns Brander Matthews—she is out for big game—for using *as . . . as*, when

he should say *so . . . as*, in negative sentences: "he is not as active at 70 as he was at 40." She adds, "I am right, am't I?" Personally I agree with her, though it is a matter of taste rather than of grammar or syntax.

It is well to indicate a change in the meaning of a word by a change in the spelling. I follow the English usage in writing *tyre* for an automobile, *cheque* for a bank, and *storey* for an edifice. It is pleasant to note that the abominable American spelling *segar*, once very common, is moribund; and along with it has vanished the comic accent on the first syllable.

A lady from Springfield, Massachusetts, writes, "As a contraction of 'am I not?' what is the objection to 'amn't I?' All my life I have heard and used it, not once questioning the propriety of doing so." This is interesting. I have never heard it except in jest, but I hope to. Is it really common in Springfield? I am more than ever determined to use it, now emboldened by my correspondent, but I shall spell it "am't" I.

A press despatch from London states that Doctor J. A. Fleming, inventor of the wireless valve—whatever that is—in a lecture to electrical engineers, said that the phrase "the rough-coated, dough-faced ploughman went coughing and hiccoughing through the streets of Scarborough," was used by Americans to find a method of reproducing by telephone all the variations of

vowels. He added that the number of waves set up by speech could be counted and weighed. Even a lecturer emitted only twenty-five foot-pounds of power per hour. Dear me! I had thought it was more than that. But this explains why, at the expiration of the average lecture, the audience is more exhausted than either the speaker or the subject.

Mrs. W. K. Clifford, the English novelist, writes me an interesting letter about the present state of the English novel. Her husband was the famous mathematician and philosopher, and the conversations in their house were so brilliant that they literally became the talk of London. Years ago I read her admirable novel, *The Love-Letters of a Worldly Woman,* and it will be remembered that she recently scored a success with *Miss Fingal.* With her present letter she enclosed clippings from the London newspapers, giving an account of a public debate between Rebecca West and Sheila Kaye-Smith. The subject was the Sex Novel. Mr. J. C. Squire, poet, critic, parodist, and editor of that excellent periodical, the London *Mercury,* was in the chair, and there was a large audience. Miss Kaye-Smith asserted that there was no alternative to the sex novel, and that we did not want one, which remark was greeted with cheers. She also said that sex was one of the few abiding emotions we had left; we were different from our forefathers in most things, but not in this.

Therefore if the novelist wished to make a universal appeal, he should write a sex novel. Miss West said there was no such thing as a sex novel among works of art; such books were written by people who were unable to make their writings interesting without this motive. She then proclaimed a stiff doctrine, saying that novels were much too easy; they should contain more thought, and be more difficult to read. "When you get hold of a good novel you ought to be prepared to spend not two days, but two months, over it. You ought to do that ten times if it is a good-enough novel." In summing up, Mr. Squire said he should take away with him a picture of Miss Kaye-Smith hugging to her bosom the last slight element of crudity that remained in our civilisation, and he would long remember the spectacle of Miss West standing on that platform advising them to take two months to read a novel and to read it ten times, taking two months each time. That might possibly be good for the reader, but it would certainly knock the bottom out of the fiction market. Mr. Squire's remarks pleased the audience, but I wonder if they increased his popularity with the speakers.

Miss West's advice would have to be followed with certain books. I remember reading of a conversation where A said, "I love the novels of Henry James; I read them over and over again." B: "You have to."

Another of Mrs. Clifford's cuttings shows that

the quarrel between the old and the young in London is in an acute stage. Some curious specimen of youth published an anonymous and hysterical protest against old people, heading it *The Secret Cry of the Young*. The article expressed the fervent wish that all people over sixty would die, for they are a "ghastly nuisance to young people." The editor of the paper declared that this murderous wish had elicited "hundreds of letters of protest," which seems to me to prove that there are as many idiots in London as in New York. But the crazy child who wrote it had the satisfaction of drawing a contemptuous reply from Sir Philip Burne-Jones, who wrote, "The aspirations which have been seething for so long in your youthful breast without means of expression have at last found noble utterance. And it all amounts to this: *It's our money you want!*"

Well, let me quote once more from a worldly philosopher who had a knack of summarising human thought, I mean the prize-fighter John L. Sullivan. "Various candidates for the championship say they want this and they want that. But what they all really want is the good old dough."

The recent death of Maurice Hewlett brought out the following anecdote in the London press. In 1896 Mr. and Mrs. Hewlett lived across the street from Mrs. Clifford. One day he called upon her with a huge parcel, informed her that

it contained a novel he had written, and asked her to read it. It lay on her table for days, but one night she tackled it in desperation, and read it straight through with steadily increasing enthusiasm. She sent it to Macmillans, and heard nothing. Meeting the head of the firm at a party, he said, "Your friend's book won't do. Our reader says—" "Your reader is an idiot," said Mrs. Clifford. "Go home and read it yourself." The book was *The Forest Lovers* and Macmillans published it. For some weeks there was silence, then came universal acclaim, and Hewlett received fame and fortune. He quite properly dedicated the novel to Mrs. Clifford.

A London author writes me that young people over there do not now read good books, with the exception of Kipling and Stevenson. The boys still like *Robinson Crusoe*, but they are not familiar with *Gulliver's Travels* or *Pilgrim's Progress*. In my boyhood I unaccountably missed four works of universal fame—*The Wide Wide World*, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *Scottish Chiefs*, and *The Swiss Family Robinson*. The last three I shall never read, but some day I am going to examine *The Wide Wide World* to discover what gave it such sensational success in both English and American households. The popularity of some books is more interesting than either the books or their authors.

Of new American novels, I have most enjoyed

Mr. Podd, by Freeman Tilden. Henry Ford is the only begetter of the story, but Mr. Podd is by no means a mere copy of the automobile-manufacturer. This is a sprightly and winsome tale, full of toothless satire and wise tolerance. The reformer and the reactionary afford to the reader much diversion, and over all the fun is the fragrance of romance.

I am glad that the publishers have decided to reissue Nesta Webster's memoirs of the Chevalier de Boufflers. It should have a wide circulation. It is a contribution—from the aristocratic point of view—to the history of the French Revolution; but mainly it is an account of one of the most interesting love-stories in the world, biography and not fiction. One obtains an intimate view of the brilliant conversationalists of the eighteenth century. Their wit defied both life and death. King Stanislas, who had received from his daughter, the Queen of France, the present of a wadded dressing-gown, got his death from it, for it caught fire. An old woman who endeavoured to help him was severely burned, and in the midst of his agony the king said, "How strange that at our ages you and I should both burn with the same flame!" He was eighty-eight. After a fortnight of suffering he died, and in his last hours he dictated a letter to his daughter about the gown. "You gave it to me to keep me warm; but it has kept me too warm."

Wit certainly has a preservative quality.

Many women of the salons lived to be octogenarians, and age seemed to act on their wits like a whetstone. They practiced the art of conversation with such skill that they feared not the loss of youth and beauty; the older they grew, the more in demand they seemed to be. Perhaps the older generation to-day might learn something from them. A well-furnished mind and the ability to talk brightly on many subjects form a good insurance against life. Those wonderful men and women of the *ancien régime* had their faults, but they bored nobody; hence they were beloved by their contemporaries and envied by the young. There is never much trouble in any family where the children secretly hope some day to resemble their parents.

Another book which I recommend to students of human nature is *English Diaries*, by Arthur Ponsonby. This is a review of English diaries from the sixteenth to the twentieth century; and let me add that the author's introduction, of some forty pages, on Diary Writing, is as good as anything he subsequently quotes. This is the kind of book I have been waiting for, and I wonder that it has not appeared before. Mr. Ponsonby divides the population of the earth into two classes—those who do and those who do not write diaries, and he wisely says that to the second class the first is "absolutely and entirely incomprehensible." The objective and the subjective method are discussed, together with the matter most commonly found in private

journals. He makes a candid examination of the oft-discussed question, Is it possible to write a diary without imagining some one at some future time reading it? He goes into this with thoroughness; but I think one point may be added. Many believe no diary to be wholly frank, because of the thought of a remote future examination; but is there not another reason? It is difficult to write a diary without the thought that it may *very soon* be read by some one else. Who can be certain while writing that he can always and every day successfully lock up the book? He may be suddenly interrupted by an accident, by a calamity, by an unexpected visitor, by any one of a thousand things; the diary might therefore be for a moment forgotten, or one might be compelled in an emergency to leave it at the mercy of others in the household. This is one reason diaries are not a precise report of thought.

This book is a revelation of human nature; and after one has read Mr. Ponsonby's introduction, one feels complete confidence in the author's taste and judgment as exercised in the four hundred pages of extracts.

Hermann Sudermann's *Book of My Youth* is practically a diary of the years from his earliest recollections of childhood in East Prussia to the beginning of his journalistic days in Berlin. I hope that he will continue the story, at least far enough to cover the period of his first successes in writing novels and plays. Judging by the

English translation, the narrative is carelessly written. The author is more interested in telling us of his thoughts and experiences than in the manner of it. Possibly for this reason it seems more trustworthy. He cannot keep self-pity out of his pages, for he suffered so terribly from extreme poverty, from lack of food and lack of sleep, from ridicule at the school and at the university, that it would be a painful book did we not know that these hardships ended in success. The sentimentality so evident in the German temperament gushes from nearly every page; but it is not repellent, and the same art that makes Sudermann's novels and plays so interesting is equally triumphant here. It seems a miracle that he did not succumb, and I think few ambitious young men, no matter how rugged in constitution, would be either able or willing to endure like Sudermann. He frequently alludes to the famous Sudermann beard, which he says was for twenty years the joke but also the envy of his contemporaries. He certainly had phenomenal whiskers, so copious that Bryant or Whitman would have turned peevish at the sight. Even his famous character, Graf Trast, did not have such luxuriant foliage as his creator.

The character of his mother, as drawn by her son, is especially appealing, and it is pleasant to remember that she is still living, at the age of ninety-seven. No writer seems more attached to his native soil and to his family; a fine trait,

when we remember both. The peasant element is as strong in Sudermann as it was in Carlyle.

Although he has had amazing successes on the international stage, I believe that his early novel, *Frau Sorge*, will outlast everything else he has written. That has already become a classic. It is one of the very few first-rate novels written in German. It contains among other features the most thorough study of boyish *bashfulness* that I know. The agony caused by this characteristic of adolescence receives no more sympathy than seasickness; but it has been the cause of many suicides.

I deeply regret to record the death of the famous actor Louis Calvert, who died in New York, 18 July 1923. He was a remarkably intelligent and thoroughly competent artist. An Englishman by birth, he had become a citizen of the United States. He had been on the stage forty-five years. Every one who remembers the New Theatre in New York will remember Mr. Calvert's superb interpretation of old Anthony in John Galsworthy's *Strife*. He was a friend of Shaw, and created the rôles of the waiter in *You Never Can Tell* and of Andrew Undershaft in *Major Barbara*. It was he who directed the production of *A Winter's Tale* by the New Theatre company, and he was later associated with John Corbin in the presentation of *The Tempest*. I have a copy of his edition of *Hamlet*, called *An Actor's Hamlet*, with his manuscript notes, which are of high value. His book, *Problems of the*

Actor, I recommend to all who love the theatre. In late years he was a member of the New York Theatre Guild, appearing in *He Who Gets Slapped*, *R. U. R.* and other plays. I wish I knew of some one who could take his place.

America may well be proud of an important addition to Shakespearian scholarship. This is a new *Life of Shakespeare* by Professor Joseph Quincy Adams, of Cornell. Doctor Adams is one of the ablest Elizabethan scholars in the world, and has spent years of study and investigation in the preparation of this work. Let me add that it is as interesting as it is valuable.

A new member of the Fano Club is John Henry Wigmore, dean of the law faculty at Northwestern University. He showed his originality at an early period by being born in San Francisco. He was graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty, was professor of law at Keio University, Tokio, and has now reached the climax of his career as a citizen of the world by receiving an election to the Fano Club. He writes from that delectable place, "The town is now becoming a most popular bathing resort, with scores of new villini on the shore." When Professor Tinker and Father McCune joined, they sent me a picture post-card showing a bathing pavilion, to which work of art they appended this thrilling lyric:

> To be in Italy and not see Fano?
> McCune and Tinker both cried, Ah, no!
> For not to go, and here's the rub,

Means missing Phelps's Fano Club.
In Fano on Sunday shops close, all and each,
Save this poor place on the bathing beach:
But even this, we think, by Jiminy,
Is better than a card from Rimini.

Browning was not the only poet inspired by Fano.

Other new members of 1923 are W. D. Crockett and Sarah G. Crockett, of State College, Pennsylvania, who were led to see Fano and the Guardian Angel by my remarks in *Scribner's* and the comments thereupon in *The Outlook*. Mr. Crockett adds: "Please notify me as to the date of the annual dinner." The annual dinner of the Fano Club will be held at New Haven some time between the first of November and the eighth of May, and I advise all members to save every evening between those dates, and to renew their subscriptions to *Scribner's Magazine*, wherein will soon appear exclusive and precise information. Suffice it now to say that the dinner will be held, and members of the Fano Club will receive personal invitations.

The distinguished surgeon Doctor W. W. Keen writes me from London that, having just read my remarks on the overlicking of envelopes, with which he is in hearty agreement, he is moved to add, "More frequent and quite as irritating is the custom of many people to apply the edges of the paper when folding the letter with meticulous care exactly edge to edge."

I believe in saving time in every possible way.

Not that I mind a little frivolity and idling and loafing, for such things are no more a waste of time than rest and sleep. But to have letters badly folded and sealed—that is the cause of an absolute waste of time plus unnecessary friction. For the same reason, parents should not give their children long names. If a child is named Epaphroditus Bartholomew Holcombe-Smith, Junior, and if he survives such an appellation, he will probably lose what will amount to three years of his life in writing his full name on those frequent occasions when it becomes necessary. Furthermore, parents should give a daughter only one name; then when she marries, she can preserve the family name between her Christian and her husband's last name. When I was a boy, I knew a girl named May Day. Such a name closely approaches perfection; think of the time saved in writing cheques and on other occasions! It is also hard on a child to give it a name that few can either pronounce or spell; the victim has to spend a large slice of his life answering questions and making explanations. A name is an individual's only label; the only thing standing between him and absolute oblivion. Children are at the mercy of their parents in this as in so many other ways.

Doctor Keen writes that my reference to Bernard Shaw reminds him of Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma*. "Twenty or more years ago I bought and read with deep interest Sarah Smith's novel with exactly the same title. . . . Either

Shaw was ignorant of the literature of his own country or he deliberately plagiarised the title." I regret to say that I never heard of this Sarah Smith—though that was the name of a particularly admirable teacher I had at the West Middle School in Hartford; Doctor Keen says that in fertility she rivals Trollope.

If one is named Smith, it should be an incentive to the attainment of distinction; think of what Holmes said of the author of *My Country, 'Tis of Thee*, and think also of the immortality of the friend of Pocahontas.

Holmes thought that Smith's national hymn was rubbish, but that it would outlast all the better work of his contemporaries. It contains something that will make it live forever. Browning is a greater poet than Smith, but he could not have written a national song. National songs must be sentimental, and Browning was too passionate to be sentimental.

Although I have never heard of Sarah's *Doctor's Dilemma*, I deplore the custom of repeating names for novels. It is quite unnecessary. A short time ago I saw widely advertised a book called *The Fruit of the Tree;* I failed to see any review of it that commented on the fact that Edith Wharton had already used that title. Thomas Hardy's original name for *Jude the Obscure* was much better than the one he finally gave it; but he rejected *Hearts Insurgent* because he found it had been used by somebody else.

Doctor Keen is a model and an inspiration.

He is eighty-six years old, and went to England this summer to fight the anti-vaccinationists. He tells me there is great danger in that country of an epidemic. Instead of eighty-five per cent of the babies being vaccinated, only thirty-eight per cent are thus protected. The *Times* advocates compulsory vaccination, and Doctor Keen has come in as a valuable ally, for he is as well known abroad as in America. But isn't it a fine spectacle to see this magnificent octogenarian travelling across the ocean to fight for progress? In his recent book, *I Believe in God and in Evolution*, he combines science and faith in a characteristically reasonable way. Every one should read that booklet and follow it up by reading one even more recently published, called *Evolution and Religion*, written by the distinguished scientist Henry Fairfield Osborn. There is nothing antiquated about true Christianity, for its Founder was so modern that it will take the world many centuries to reach His ideas.

III

Of all the poems that in childhood shake our hearts and in later years our ribs, of all specimens of sentiment turned by experience into sources of mirth, I have long regarded *The Captain's Daughter*, by James T. Fields, as almost in a class by itself.

> We were crowded in the cabin,
> Not a soul would dare to sleep,—
> It was midnight on the waters,
> And a storm was on the deep.

Every one who has attended an American school knows this ballad, for it is singularly well adapted to the needs of those who are required to "speak a piece." Its chief merit is its merciful brevity; but it furnishes also the appealing dramatic contrast, and it runs so trippingly on the tongue that even a dullard can learn it by heart. Furthermore, the heroine of the poem is about the same age as she who most fervently recites it; and the moral lesson is so obvious that even those who run away from it cannot help reading it.

The most accomplished elocutionists who declaim it, are, however, inferior in technique to the captain's daughter herself, for at the height

of the tempest, when there is an infernal clatter and racket, we are informed

> But his little daughter whispered,

and apparently this whisper was heard not only by the captain but by the passengers.

Why do you suppose a *publisher* wrote this thing? Was it an unconscious echo of the slush that filled his mail, the lees of sentimentality that he was daily forced to drink, or was it a long-postponed but final turning of the worm, a method of revenge on his contributors?

> "We are lost!" the captain shouted,
> As he staggered down the stairs.

Until last week, I had regarded this captain as unique. Imagine a ship's captain, when the passengers were in terror, leaving the deck, rushing below, and shouting "We are lost!" I reflected that a man whose name was Fields ought not to pose as a nautical authority.

But last week I was reading Oscar Browning's diverting *Memories of Later Years*, in which he describes a voyage on the Mediterranean in a vessel that inspired little confidence. "We were told that on the last voyage she was in great danger in the Gulf of Lyons, which can be worse than the Bay of Biscay. The captain came down to the cabin and told the passengers to

be prepared for death. Some prayed, some screamed, and some fainted, but the crisis never came off, and the good old *Argonaut* rode triumphant."

It sounds like *Pinafore;* yet, now that we have this authentic incident, which I should like to use as a foot-note to *The Captain's Daughter*, I am in a muse. Possibly in former times it was the custom of sea-captains, when the weather became blowy, to go below dramatically and bawl their despair at the passengers.

Oscar Browning has the garrulity of old age without fatuity. The author recounts his experiences at Cambridge University, in India, in Russia, and in Italy. He tells good stories; and he makes no attempt to conceal his faith in Esperanto and in Christian Science. He has no modesty, either false or true; but it is inspiring to see a man of eighty-five so vigorous and alert in mind and so whole-heartedly in love with life.

He has many interesting anecdotes about Campbell-Bannerman, whom even his enemies could not help liking. He was a man of extraordinary loyalty and capacity for affection. Lord Morley in his *Recollections* says that when C.-B. was prime minister, some one wrote him about an important matter of state, and received the reply that just then the premier's wife was very ill, and that her health meant more to him than the whole British Empire. Many will regard such an answer with repugnance, even with con-

tempt. For my part, I admire him, first, for feeling like that, and second, for having the candour to say so.

Do you like to read of trials in criminal courts, of murder mysteries, of the struggle of wits between an accused individual and the machinery of the law? My natural interest in these is considerably heightened when they belong to history rather than to fiction, and when they are told by an expert. To those who feel as Scott, Stevenson, and Andrew Lang felt on such matters, let me recommend three books by William Roughead, an eminent Scots lawyer and historical investigator. *Twelve Scots Trials* (1913), *The Riddle of the Ruthvens* (1919), and *Glengarry's Way* (1922). They are revelations of human nature. The quiet, precise, orderly, and humorous style actually heightens the sensational nature of the events.

Of new books in literary criticism, one of the most attractive is *Books and Authors*, by Robert Lynd, an Irishman, who has made a special preface for the American edition. His short essays are about equally divided between "standard" and contemporary authors, or, as he expresses it, between "More or Less Ancient" and "More or Less Modern," with an interlude and a finale. In the preface he ably defends the practice of writing books about books, using the analogy of books about birds and books about butterflies. His observations extend in time

from Herrick the poet to T. S. Eliot. I like particularly the last chapter, wherein Mr. Lynd tells us what he conceives to be the function of the critic. "This love of excellence is indisputably the first of all the requisites of a critic—love of excellence and acquaintance with excellence. The critic's first standard is his enthusiasm for the great writers."

I have often thought that more books on literature should be written by physicians. As Cordelia summoned a nerve specialist to take care of her father, and Macbeth one to look after his wife—both admirable doctors—so a considerable amount of professional criticism has been written of those two characters by alienists. There was also, I believe, a consultation of physicians on the case of the hero in Tennyson's *Maud.*

Many contemporary novels seem to call especially for the attention of nerve specialists. The late Professor Raleigh said: "Books are written to be read by those who can understand them; their possible effect on those who cannot is a matter of medical rather than of literary interest." But the situation has changed; to-day there are many novels which are widely read, but cannot be understood except by men whose training has been in medical rather than in literary schools. For this reason, I welcome a book like that by Doctor Joseph Collins, called *The Doctor Looks at Literature.* A professional alienist, his interests extend beyond the conven-

tional fields of science; he is the author of an entertaining book called *Idling in Italy*.

Although the doctor is extremely cautious in pronouncing any positive judgment on matters of science, he is cock-sure on questions in literature. Those who are not repelled by this dogmatism—and I don't mind it particularly, being thoroughly used to it from those who are neither doctors nor critics—will find his chapters illuminating. And I wonder if those who read his last essay will continue to treat with adulation an author whose real tendencies are there plainly described?

Nothing could more fitly illustrate my remarks on librarians than *Revelations of a Library Life*, by David Cuthbertson. Mr. Cuthbertson has been a librarian in Edinburgh for forty-six years, and has been paid so ill and confined so well that he has never seen the city of London. His book is the intentionally artless thinking aloud of a man who has lived amid printed volumes, parchments, and manuscripts. He has seen the tide of university activities ebb and flow; and the view of professors and students as a librarian sees them is part of the charm of his work. On a ridiculous salary, this unpretentious gentleman has managed to support a wife and educate six children, who are now scattered abroad in Britain and in India, and whose letters are the joy of his old age. Like most librarians, he has done good and not evil all the days of his

life; and he has every reason to be content. I regard him as a hero, and I think many will agree with me when they read these two paragraphs from his book.

"I find I was first engaged in the University Library at the sum of £70 a year. When I had ten pounds more I married and, although there were many forbidding barriers, with the help of man's best helpmeet, an excellent managing wife with the bravest of spirits, trials, monetary and otherwise, have turned out to be as adverse breezes, and with small sums received for writing, the wolf was kept from the door, and a quiet harbour was reached after many years, and several decades.

"I have four sons and two daughters. The eldest son is Secretary to Cambridge University Library; the next, who passed with honours in Classics, is Librarian of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh; another is a banker in Calcutta, and the fourth is an Art Master, having won, in 1921, the travelling Scholarship in Art at the Royal College of Art in Edinburgh. My eldest daughter has been over eleven years in Allahabad, where she founded what is known as the Modern High School, with upwards of 600 boys in attendance, and my youngest daughter has taken honours in French and German, and passed in Russian. She has qualified for a teacher, and is principal language mistress in an Academy in the West of Scotland."

In the August issue, I stated that General

H. M. Robert had become the oldest living graduate of West Point. I was mistaken, and am grateful to two correspondents, both of whom inform me that Brigadier-General Horatio Gates Gibson, now living in Washington, was born in Baltimore, 22 May 1827, and was graduated at the United States Military Academy in 1847. He is now therefore ninety-six years old, ten years older than the author of Robert's *Rules of Order*. I thank my correctors, and salute General Gibson. I hope that I may have the honour of recording his one hundredth birthday in *Scribner's Magazine*, in the issue for May 1927.

When I was a freshman at Yale, I remember a literary decision handed down one day from the professor's desk, and I not only remember it, but remember the speaker's facial expression and the tone of his voice. While I am under no illusion as to professorial influence on students, there is one commonly heard statement which I know to be false. "Nobody remembers what he was taught in the classroom." The speaker usually proceeds to emphasise the strikingly original thought that what students really learn in college they learn from one another. Now while I was and am devoted to my classmates, I learned more from my teachers; and so far from everything they said being forgotten, I can remember all sorts of *obiter dicta*, *verbatim et literatim*. If the faculty sayings vanish on their utterance, why is it that at class reunions, bald

and fat alumni talk so much and so often about the hours in the classroom, and what the "Prof" on such and such an occasion said? Perhaps no person is remembered longer than the teacher. Some are hated, some are despised, some are ridiculed and parodied, but few are forgotten.

Our brilliant instructor in Latin, Ambrose Tighe, who for many years has been a lawyer in St. Paul, and served his State in the legislature, used to throw off illustrative comments which are as fresh in my mind after forty years as when I first heard them.

But the particular literary decision I referred to above was given by Professor Cyrus Northrop, afterward president of the University of Minnesota. He was a dignified, even majestic personage. He always wore broadcloth, a long frock coat, with a waistcoat cut very low, revealing a vast expanse of glittering shirt-front. We had the highest regard and reverence for him, but in speaking of him to one another we invariably and affectionately called him "Guts" Northrop, or merely "Gutsy." He never used colloquial language, but spoke formally and correctly. One morning in the classroom, I remember his saying with solemnity: "Gentlemen, I am somewhat behind the age in my admiration for Macaulay."

The reason why this particular pronouncement on Macaulay recurs to my mind is because Lawrence Abbott, the accomplished contributing editor of *The Outlook*, recently admitted having

a similar taste. His printed statement of it drew from a gentleman in San Francisco a letter from which I quote:

"Macaulay's critical works naturally fairly swarm with instances of fresh and independent thinking similar to that expressed by . . . L. F. A. but may we be pardoned for quoting two instances especially à propos? First in a letter to his sister Hannah, August 1843, while not specifically referring to the Tower but rather viewing the subject from a different angle, he comments as follows: 'The Cathedral, which was my chief object at Chartres, rather disappointed me; not that it is not a fine church: but I had heard it described as one of the most magnificent in Europe. Now I have seen finer churches in England, France, and Germany. It wants vastness and its admirers make the matter worse by proving to you that it is a great deal larger than it looks, and by assuring you that the proportions are so exquisite as to produce the effect of littleness. I have heard the same canted about a much finer building—St. Peter's.' Again, in his admirable essay on Southey's edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress:* 'One unpardonable fault, the fault of tediousness, pervades the whole of the *Faerie Queene.* We become sick of cardinal virtues and deadly sins, and long for the society of plain men and women. Of the persons who read the first canto, not one in ten reaches the end of the first book, and not one in a hundred perseveres to the end of the poem. Very few and very

weary are those who are in at the death of the Blatant Beast.'"

To this interesting letter Doctor Abbott replied:

"It is the fashion now, I believe, to turn up the nose a little at Macaulay. I am just ignoble enough, however, to find great pleasure and satisfaction in his writings. Within a year or two I have read for the second time his history of England, and I am constantly taking down his essays and reading them here and there. His style is delightful and I find myself usually in sympathy with his judgments. I had never run across his criticism of the 'Tower of Chartres' or of the *Fairy Queen.* Mr. Phelps will sympathise with the first, and I certainly sympathise with the second."

While I was reading these letters, I received one by T. S. Perry, telling me of his suddenly renewed enthusiasm for Macaulay. Naturally I was interested, and forwarded to him the Abbott-San Francisco correspondence. To my increased interest he wrote me that he had just called on a friend of his at Dublin, New Hampshire; his host spoke of "his sudden reversion that happened very recently, to the worship of Macaulay, and did this without any suggestion from me, but as his own contribution to our talk. I told him of my experience and yours, and of —— who went to Jamaica last winter

with Macaulay's History and turned to the Essays."

Mr. Perry continues:

"It is certainly a curious bundle of coincidences. Now does T. B. M., perhaps just released from Purgatory, try to boom his reputation in this world, working in some mysterious way through our exceptionally open minds? Or do our thoughts just flow into our minds (and out again) from some great sea of thought, entirely without our control? I have often wondered whence come the thoughts that flow into my mind entirely without my doing any thing about it. They flow in like a tide. Just now a certain T. B. M. matter seems straying in the universe and gets into our thoughts."

In my own opinion, T. B. M. is the best historian for the T. B. M. Macaulay is always interesting. He possessed the gift of language at an early age. When he was four years old, he injured his finger, and a few minutes later, a lady asked him if he felt better; the child replied: "Thank you, Madam, the agony is abated."

I confess that to a large extent I share the late Professor Lounsbury's unashamed enthusiasm for Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome.* In that kind of poetry, they are unsurpassed. And I cannot reread *The Battle of Naseby* without a stirring of the blood; though immediately after reading it, one should recite the equally stirring *Cavalier Tunes* of Browning.

I was not aware that Macaulay had made any comment, favourable or otherwise, on Chartres; but for fear of a possible misunderstanding, I ought to repeat that as a candidate for the Ignoble Prize I mentioned the *plain tower* of Chartres, not the cathedral itself. The plain tower to me has little significance, and I shall not forget my disappointment when I first saw the outside of the cathedral; but the interior of Chartres is to me most impressive; it is *écrasant*.

I remember how amused I was in reading Bishop Burnet's *Travels*, to find his comment on Milan: the cathedral "hath nothing to commend it of architecture, it being built in the rude Gothick manner." The good bishop wrote this pronouncement over two hundred years ago; was his love for his own Salisbury responsible?

What Macaulay says of *The Faerie Queene* is true for the general reader, and with all his learning, Macaulay never forgot that individual. But it leads me to call attention to another club that I have founded, The Faerie Queene Club. There are no entrance fees, no dues, and no testimonial of character required. In order to join, one must have read every word of the mighty poem. The first to be admitted was the Reverend Doctor Edward A. Reed, of Holyoke, Massachusetts. Another is the American poet, Brian Hooker. I shall be glad to hear of recruits. I will not say that *The Faerie Queene* is my favourite poem, for it is not; but that it richly repays a complete reading I am certain.

The fight between the Dragon and the Knight in Canto XI of the First Book is a glorious struggle. One incident, though not meant to be comic, has always seemed so to me. The Dragon shot forth a flake of fire, that caught the Knight's whiskers, making an extremely unpleasant conflagration.

Apart from its interest and beauty, *The Faerie Queene* is a particularly fine illustration of the union of those two streams, the Renaissance and the Reformation. There they combined to make a reservoir of poetry.

The challenge that I threw out—can we remember *smells?*—has drawn many letters. Positive opinions have been expressed on both sides. A letter from an invalid who has not been able to walk for sixteen years tells me that she remembers distinctly the smell of white lilacs, though she has seen none since the beginning of her misfortune. Another declares that Hudson must either have had a defective sense of smell or a poor memory. Another: "My immediate response—unsought for and instinctive—was a very fair 'phantasm' of the odour of sweet peas; and following it instantly, *but not simultaneous with it,* was the vision of my mother's dinner-table of many, many years ago, with a vase of sweet peas in the middle and a large roast of beef at one end. My brother (Eugene Schuyler) used to pick the sweet peas and put them on the table because he said that their odour

went with roast beef. You know how usual it is for a scent to bring back a scene. I was also, more deliberately, able to remember the strong sweet scent of June roses."

This letter is interesting in itself: to me it has a peculiar appeal, for I shall never forget the debt I owe to Eugene Schuyler. He first translated Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* into English, and it was his translation that made me acquainted with that masterpiece. His preface, dated 1867, is particularly interesting. Schuyler travelled extensively in Europe and in Asia, and years ago I read this tribute from one of his companions: "Eugene Schuyler was the bravest man I ever saw."

The publisher of the *Christian Endeavor World* writes me an interesting question: "May not the lack of clear memory of smells be due to the difficulty and almost impossibility of defining them? For instance, it would be quite easy to describe a violet to one who had never seen the flower, but how would you describe the fragrance?" This may have something to do with it.

A lady from Montclair writes that Hudson "expects too much of memory. Recollection, at best, is but a faint reflection of actuality. I cannot agree with what I heard Professor Münsterberg state: 'Dere are *two* tebbels. De tebbel on de floor is a tebbel, and de tebbel in de mind is a tebbel.' 'De tebbel in de mind,' is, I hold, merely an image or simulacrum of a table.

One's brain would soon be cluttered with furniture, past and present."

A gentleman from Wilkes-Barré: "I share your doubts as to Hudson's theory of the lack of power to remember smells. It seems to me that I can recall the odours of gasolene, the richer cheeses, a tuberose, and others. It is not as vivid as the recollection of a scene or a piece of music, not of the same order. . . . Recognition of a scent is clearly established. Does not that involve memory?"

A lady from Auburndale takes the opposite view, and her letter may be regarded as a commentary, convincing or not, on the query from Wilkes-Barré.

"Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne wishes to enter the controversy on smells, otherwise why, immediately after reading *As I Like It* for August, did I casually pick up *Rappaccini's Daughter*, and pounce upon the following: 'It is like the breath of a flower; but I see no flowers in the chamber'? 'Nor are there any . . . nor, I think, is there any fragrance except in your worship's imagination. Odours, being a sort of element combined of the sensual and the spiritual, are apt to deceive us in this manner. The recollection of a perfume, the bare idea of it, may easily be mistaken for a present reality.' I've always taken for granted that odour formed an important part in memories until I read what W. H. Hudson says about it. Now I feel that I have lost something precious, if it is possible to lose

what evidently one never possessed. I can't bring back a single odour that has meant much to me. It seems uncanny; the feeling one has in a dream when one struggles to speak and can't make a sound. What a strange trick of nature that the faintest whiff of some particular perfume has the power to recall vividly past scenes but my mind can't recover the odour when it has vanished! I'm afraid I am on Hudson's side. After sealing this (slightly) I'm going out and mingle with a large bed of phlox just to see if my brain will give credit to my poor cheated nose for even temporary activity."

Finally, E. C. Huffaker, of Chuckey, Tennessee, writes:

"I have a watermelon patch near my summer home, which is also my winter home, and about the time I was reading in *Scribner* about our inability to remember odours, two different negroes told me that in passing by on the railroad 500 feet away, they had distinctly noticed the odour of the watermelons, and explained that it was similar to the odour of a melon freshly cut. Now these melons are not yet ripe and none of them have been cut, and while standing in the patch and surrounded by scores of them I can detect not the slightest odour arising from them, nor could my son when I called his attention to the matter; and yet these negroes recognised a pronounced odour when 500 feet away. The only conclusion to be drawn was that these negroes, and possibly all negroes, had a more perfectly developed sense of smell than I had, and per-

haps than the white race in general. This put it in my mind to test Mr. Hudson's theory, and accordingly I interrogated the next negro I met in regard to his experience and ability in the way of remembering odours. . . . I found that Jim had also noticed the smell of watermelons while passing, still at the distance of 500 feet, and he had probably made a note of the locality. . . . I then asked if he could remember the smell of a muskmelon. After a little hesitation he said he was not sure whether he could or not. And then he added, 'I can remember some smells and some I can't. . . . I can remember how apples smell, and peaches.' When asked if he could remember distinctly he replied so positively that he could, and in the same way that he remembered how his house looked, that I could not do otherwise than believe him. So it would seem that Mr. Hudson is right and that among the less developed races the memory of odours remains. . . . The white farmers of the South have been accustomed to grow their melons in hidden, out of the way places, in order that the lawless and predatory might not be able to find them. But what is the use? The negro can smell them out, and what is worse he remembers how the newly cut melon smells and I do not doubt he remembers how it tastes; and in consequence the temptation to visit a patch which his keen sense of smell has located is not to be resisted."

To sum up, let me suggest that all who are interested in this question and all who are not, read with diligence Zona Gale's novel, *Faint Perfume.*

Other new novels which I heartily recommend are *Raw Material*, by Dorothy Canfield, which is after all not a novel, but a collection of sketches; it is fiercely interesting, and no one can read it without respect for the author's art and intelligence. *Midwinter* is a ripping eighteenth-century English romance, by John Buchan; among the characters is Samuel Johnson. *Through the Wheat*, by Thomas Boyd, is the most impartial story of the war that I have read anywhere; it brings me nearer the trenches than any other book. The unexpressed love of truth in this objective story is highly commendable; for the tale is neither sentimental nor obscene. *The Back Seat*, by G. B. Stern, is assuredly her best performance thus far; it is a story reminding one of *This Freedom* and *Bread*, carrying a similar idea with more delicate art. It is a pleasure to read such English; which remark applies with equal force to *Grey Wethers*, a story by V. Sackville West, as invigorating in its identification of the characters with the environment as is Hardy's *Woodlanders*. Margaret P. Montague has written one of the best American novels of the year in *Deep Channel*, wherein two derelicts arouse and hold the interest of the sympathetic reader. Every American should certainly read *The Hawkeye*, by Herbert Quick, who, like his name, is very much alive. This novel has scored a well-deserved success, and would have made a sensation, were it not slightly overshadowed by its predecessor, *Vandemark's Folly*. These two tales are not only good, and at times thrilling,

they are a contribution to the history of our Middle West.

To that interesting class of persons who whenever a new book comes out read an old one—it must keep them busy—let me recommend, nay insist, that they read H. G. Wells's *The Wheels of Chance*, written in 1895. Those who have never seen it have before them unmitigated joy; those who have not read it since the last century will have a joy mitigated with regret. The regret will not be for themselves.

Prescott Childs, R. G. Rincliffe, Isaac Horton, 3d, have joined the Fano Club; the youngest members are Stuyvesant Butler and Revell McCallum, undergraduates at Yale; and the youngest member of the "am't I" club is the four-year-old daughter of a teacher of history in Detroit, who uses the expression with the dogmatic grace of childhood. I am informed that the mountaineers of western North Carolina say "am I not?"

A gentleman from Rangoon, Burma, writes me that his children take delight in *Gulliver's Travels* and in *Pilgrim's Progress*. He adds: "The children are normal—I think. At least the younger is a red-headed, freckled young codger wearing his first trousers with pockets with the swank of a sergeant-major."

Are Baptists especially fond of prize-fighting? The incident I narrated of my father has drawn

two communications, one from a minister who says that when he was a student in the Chicago Theological Seminary, in the midst of a solemn meeting on the Day of Prayer there squeezed into his pew a late-comer who excitedly whispered, "Corbett has knocked out Sullivan!" A Philadelphia citizen writes me that his mother, who was a Baptist in faith and a super-Victorian in morals, followed with eagerness in the newspapers every prize-fight, from the first training exercises down to the finish. And she always took sides. Now the Baptists had to fight their way to freedom; one of the earliest was tried by a judge who had a grim sense of humour, for he sentenced the man to be drowned.

IV

WHAT is the funniest book ever written? In trying to reawaken the echoes of forgotten laughter, let us remember and consider only those books which their authors intended to be funny. An overdone melodrama is funnier than a farce, and serious verse is sometimes more diverting than jingles. If we were to include unintentional humour, I should like a place reserved for *The Sweet Singer of Michigan*, and for the catalogue of an American "university" I once read. Statistics? Nothing is funnier than statistics when studied from the proper angle.

The best answer I ever heard to the bizarre theory that the madness of Ophelia was meant to be funny, was given by William Winter, who wrote: "It is strange that if Shakespeare intended her to be funny, he did not make her so."

Arthur E. Bostwick, the admirable St. Louis librarian, in a communication to Christopher Morley's column in the New York *Evening Post*, says "a funny book is a contradiction in terms. Only brief compositions can be funny as a whole." There are exceptions to prove this rule. Frank Stockton's brilliant novel *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine* is continuously and irresistibly funny. A still longer book, Arnold Bennett's *Mr. Prohack*, is a Marathon of humour. Mr. Bostwick enquires: "Did

you ever hear a man tell a funny story an hour long?" No: but I have heard Stephen Leacock talk an hour long and keep his audience laughing; for, like Mark Twain, Professor Leacock is funny both with typewriter and with voice. William J. Locke's *Septimus* made me laugh louder in solitude than almost any other modern novel. George Ade's original *Fables in Slang* were certainly provocative of mirth. Why did he stop writing plays? *The College Widow* was fine farce and fine criticism. For an absolutely side-splitting book—which to be sure is short—let me recommend *In Need of Change*, by Julian Street. That masterpiece reduced me to a state of gibbering helplessness, so that, like Elymas in the Bible, I "went about seeking some to lead me by the hand."

Every humourist is an interpreter of life and a benefactor of mankind. I suppose that Artemus Ward's "lectures" must have been near perfection, though I don't care for his literary "remains."

One of the anomalies of the twentieth century is A. S. M. Hutchinson, who, in *Once Aboard the Lugger*, wrote a novel that is continuously and delightfully humorous, and in *This Freedom* wrote another that failed for the lack of a sense of humour.

A magnificent answer was given by F. P. Adams of the New York *World* to the British novelist D. H. Lawrence. The latter said: "It must be terrible to be witty every day." "No,"

said Mr. Adams, "not so terrible as never to be witty at all."

The mastery of the art of parody requires peculiar talents. One must not only have the rare gift of mimicry, one must use it like an artist. In technique, one must be the absolute equal of the illustrious victim. It is as fatal to overdo parody as to overdo sentiment; thus most American parodists fail. The best we have is the excellent Louis Untermeyer, who is also one of our leading poets. I suppose the pinnacle of parody was attained by C. S. Calverley in *Fly Leaves*. It is curious, remembering Milne's drama, *The Truth About Blayds*, that Calverley's grandfather had changed the youth's name to Blayds, and in later years the parodist reverted to the correct family name. Did he have prescience of present obloquy? Swinburne, in his volume, *The Heptalogia: or The Seven against Sense*, showed himself to be a master of parody. His series of verses, *John Jones*, a parody of Browning's *James Lee*, is the most brilliant burlesque of Browning I ever saw, and there are many. Swinburne afterward suppressed this volume; but it was once more made available by the late Thomas B. Mosher of Maine, whom all book-lovers will remember with affection. *John Jones* is as impressive technically as it is disarmingly hilarious.

J. C. Squire is one of the most accomplished parodists in activity. He can and does reproduce the manneristic tricks of many kinds of

writers, from classic poets to mortal book-reviewers. To all who enjoy that sort of thing, let me recommend Mr. Squire's *Collected Parodies*. Almost every week *Punch* contains a good illustration of this delicate art; and in the present year of grace, E. V. Knox, one of *Punch's* leading contributors, has brought a score of his pieces together in a little volume called *These Liberties*. He gives his own versions of A. S. M. Hutchinson, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Noyes, H. G. Wells, G. K. Chesterton, and others. His accuracy is admirable. He is as happy in quotation as in his original work: could anything be better than the passage from *Macbeth* which adorns his title-page?

> their virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
> The deep damnation of their taking-off.

One of the most tragic moments in my life at school was during the required exercises in elocution. I had chosen Poe's *Raven*, and the boy who immediately preceded me spoke a jovial parody of the same poem. Then came my turn, and I had no other load to fire. I suffered worse than the hero of the poem, arousing at every line much more laughter than my predecessor. At the end I sat despondent, knowing there was no nepenthe. I was little comforted by the instructor's saying that my version would live longer than the other's. I did not want to live at all.

Are all humourists sad? They say that Josh Billings cried most of the time. A man called on him when he was busy, and the person who took the visitor's card said that Billings was at that moment writing and crying. His friend was sympathetic, and wished to know what was the matter. "Oh, nothing; he always cries while he is writing." Just then the fresh copy came out for the printer; the manuscript was wet with the author's tears. He had written, "Nothing can cure a man of laziness; but a second wife will sometimes help."

An American traveller this summer sent me an extract from a Belgian newspaper which proves that the famous joke about the man carrying the tall clock is current in Brussels.

Un déménageur qui sortait d'un immeuble en portant sur le dos un énorme coffre d'horloge ancienne, heurte, sur le trottoir, un monsieur, et s'excuse:

—Pardon, M'sieu. . . .

Et celui-ci, de répliquer amer, regardant le porteur, la lourde boîte et le cadran:

—Vous ne pourriez pas porter une montre-bracelet, comme tout le monde?

Curiously enough, another funny story is analogously reproduced in all seriousness in a popular play now running in New York, where a man shows his courage and composure by killing somebody and then coolly eating ham-and-eggs. The story is of the confirmed drinker who

was told by a physician that he could cure himself of the habit if every time he felt an acute desire for a drink he would immediately *eat* something. The result was that he was nearly arrested as a lunatic. For one night in a hotel a man in the next room shot himself; our friend rose, peeped into the apartment where he had heard the noise, rushed down-stairs, and roared at the night clerk: "The man in Room 102 has just killed himself; for God's sake give me a ham-and-eggs!"

The last word on the smells controversy shall be pronounced by one of the foremost physiological-psychologists in America, who writes me:

"Memory for smell is for most people vicarious and occurs in the form of other kinds of imagery —particularly verbal. That is to say there is no re-arousal in the form of an olfactory image of the original sensation—as commonly occurs, for example, in visual experiences. But one can 'remember' a smell in a perfectly practical way without reinstating it as an olfactory image. Not a few persons, however, can re-excite olfactory images just as you evidently do visual images—and in that case may elicit just such organic reactions as were occasioned by the original sensation, *e. g.*, nausea.

"These persons are relatively rare, however, and while almost every one can by practice display some power of olfactory imagination and so of memory, in most persons it is very poorly developed. . . .

"It depends a good deal what you mean, too, when you say that 'the sense of smell in man is not nearly so strong as the sense of sight.' True, it is used much less. But the nose can detect minute amounts of certain odorous substances of an order of magnitude which makes the most delicate performances of the eye look coarse by contrast.

"Mr. Hudson evidently knew little of comparative zoology and embryology or he would have known that the reason for grouping taste and smell together and in some ways in distinction from vision and hearing, is quite different from what he assumes and mentions. Mr. Hudson is simply assuming that his own experiences are a valid basis for generalisation. They are not. Individual variation is nowhere more extreme than in the field where he has ventured to dogmatise."

I leave the scientist in command of the field, and am grateful for his information.

John Jay Chapman, who ought to live forever as a witness to truth in every successive age of falsehood, has been writing some remarkable articles in the Boston *Transcript*, which I hope he will ultimately collect in the more permanent form of a book. His article on the degeneration of American universities into business schools is particularly valuable because acutely needed. We are in danger of forgetting the true purpose of institutions of higher learning. Some time ago I read a series of articles on American col-

leges in which everything was emphasised except learning. It seemed to be assumed that the one essential was a spirit of democracy. If it could be proved that boys who waited on table, took care of furnaces, and in other ways supported themselves were treated as equals by the richer students, then the university in question was perfect and fulfilling all its ideals. It is a splendid thing to see a young man "work his way" in college or anywhere else; but surely he should know why he is doing it.

By the way, having in olden times read many attacks on Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, in which they were represented as sinks of iniquity, it is rather amusing just now to see the novels devoted to the "study of life" in American State universities, where the students are depicted as caring for nothing except societies, athletics, and dissipation. It is amusing because formerly students in those institutions now so bitterly attacked were held up to us degenerates as models of noble, democratic, ambitious, hard-working sons and daughters of the soil. Furthermore, I observe that the huge co-educational "plants" are attacked for precisely opposite reasons. Some plaintiffs urge that the boys care nothing for the girls; others, that they care for nothing else.

To those care-ridden moralists who imagine that the young people are all going to the devil, let me recommend a letter in the interesting *Memoir of Lady Rose Weigall,* written 24 July 1862.

"I sat at dinner by the Duke of Hamilton, who inquired much after you. He is still wonderfully handsome, and I was much struck by his *gracefulness* in dancing, which he did with several other middle-aged after dinner. It was a contrast to the *slouching walk* which the young men call dancing."

The italics are not mine.

I am grateful to Rachel Weigall for publishing her mother's letters. They extend in time from 1846 to 1920, and as she "knew everybody" in England and on the Continent, the intimate references to Browning, Gladstone, Disraeli, Dickens, Thackeray, and others make thrilling reading. Here we are told for the first time how that best of all novels of school life, *Tom Brown at Rugby*, came to be written. Those who like a close view of royalty will have their curiosity satisfied. Finally it is interesting to see the letters that passed between Lady Rose Weigall and Admiral von Eisendecher during the World War. It is impossible to imagine letters more difficult to write, and the success of both is the highest tribute. The letter to Lady Rose from her son in 1913, giving an account of an interview with Admiral von Tirpitz, will be eagerly read. It is pleasant to observe that the lifelong friendship between Lady Rose and the Grand Duchess of Baden was not broken by the war; although in 1916 Lady Rose speaks sadly of the bombs dropped on London by the Zeppelins, and the Grand Duchess speaks with equal sorrow of

the bombs dropped on Karlsruhe. "We passed through moments too sad to be put into words. So many children taken from their parents, so many mothers from their children," wrote the German duchess.

The *Letters of George Meredith to Alice Meynell* (some of which were printed in this magazine in May 1923) are now in book form, published in London and San Francisco, and limited to an edition of 850 copies (the type has been distributed). It is a beautiful book mechanically and spiritually. The correspondence covers the years 1896–1909, and the accompanying annotations show both discernment and good taste. Mr. Meredith was attracted to Alice Meynell by reading her weekly column in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He did not know the name of the author, but felt a kind of sacred love toward the personality which the articles revealed. At that time (1895) the brilliant Harry Cust, whose posthumous poems appeared in 1918, was the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette;* and at a meeting of the Omar Khayyam Club, at which both Meredith and Cust were present, the novelist's question was answered. He immediately wrote to Mrs. Meynell, and an intimate friendship resulted; when she and her husband came to visit him at Box Hill, he found her conversation as stimulating as her formal compositions. His letters to her and her family are deeply affectionate. There are many interesting allusions to contem-

porary authors; Meredith was difficult to please and though he did his best to share Mrs. Meynell's enthusiasms, it was only occasionally that he succeeded. There is, however, a prophetic phrase on Edith Wharton at the outset of her career (1902): "She has only to rebuke her facility, and she will do very good work." His resolute stoical acceptance of life appears in his last letter, written only three months before his death. "For me, I drag on counting more years and not knowing why. I have to lean on an arm when I would walk, and I am humiliated by requiring at times a repetition of sentences. This is my state of old age. But my religion of life is always to be cheerful."

His comment on *The Pilgrim's Scrip* of *Richard Feverel* will surprise many readers. "It is hard on me that the Scrip should be laid to my charge. These aphorisms came in the run of the pen, as dramatisings of the mind of the System-maker. I would not have owned to half a dozen of them."

Mr. Alfred A. Spencer, in an article on *Book Postage and Popular Education*, is endeavouring to aid the farmers in an original but effective manner. In an explanatory letter, he writes me:

"The fact is, as you may know, that the librarians are not getting anywhere with the farm population, their most important field, so far as educational extension is concerned. Several years ago I projected into the library world the

somewhat heretical statement that the way to reach the farmers was to make it as easy for them to borrow and return the books as it now is for the city man. For this there is no other means as comprehensive as the daily service of the rural delivery. That this service also needs the traffic will be apparent when I quote from official figures that the average load of the rural carrier, paid and equipped to carry from 250 to 500 pounds, is but 25 pounds. . . We also seek such general reduction in the rate for public-library books as is justified by their superior economy as parcels as compared with the bulky, ill-shaped, perishable, fragile, or periodically congestive packages that make up the mail."

Anything that brings public libraries and the public together is worthy of public support.

My remarks in the August number on the general ignorance of parliamentary law brought good news from West Hartford, Connecticut. The Associate Superintendent of the Public Schools informs me that

"during the past school year, I have conducted classes in civics, making a practical application of the instruction, by considering each school-room as a community, each scholar as a citizen, and by giving each scholar opportunity to practise the performance of the duties of citizenship. This involves parliamentary law practice in conducted meetings, elections, etc., and I am sure you would have been much pleased if you could

have witnessed the admirable way in which scholars of the fifth and sixth grades, some of them not more than ten years of age, performed their respective duties."

There is no reason why this method should not be generally adopted.

A professor of mathematics in the University of California, after denouncing the shop-worn phrase "in the last analysis," to which I should like to add the tiresome "acid test," writes with professional authority about an expression almost equally common:

"There is still another phrase which I as a mathematician and a lover of careful thinking and expression find particularly abominable. If a mouth-filling superlative is desired which shall also give an impression of mathematical profundity, the stupid phrase 'to the nth degree' is called in. Now the 'nth degree' is 'any degree,' and may mean the first degree, the second degree, or the thousandth, and if you recall the meaning of a negative exponent [I don't] you will see that the 'nth degree' may stand for a quantity as small as one may wish."

Which shows what an ignoramus I am. I had always supposed that the nth degree was an honorary degree, ranking above all others. I thought it was like that infinity where parallel lines meet. (How absurd to say that parallel lines meet only in infinity, when any one can stand on the rear platform of a moving train,

and see them meet a quarter of a mile away!) However, no more nth degree for me. I'm through.

What are we to think of this press despatch coming out of Russia?

"Krupslayia, wife of Nikolai Lenin, dictator of Soviet Russia, is a noted educator, having written several thousand text-books on teaching. She is also a poet, her lyrics having attracted much favourable praise in Russian literary circles. She has also written much on social problems, especially on suffrage."

She must be a pedagogue to the nth degree. (Oh, I forgot!) It is pleasant to note also that her poems have attracted "favourable praise." That is better than being damned by the faint kind. Anyhow, she seems busy.

Speaking of the moon in fiction, a missionary in China writes me that she has just discovered the following contribution to science in a novel by the late Mrs. Humphry Ward. "It was ten o'clock, and the harvest moon, as yet only a brilliant sickle, was rising." To this sentence I award the prize. My correspondent may be pardoned for suggesting that the Bible is as a rule more scientifically accurate than the general run of modern novelists.

In a remark on Barnum, I made a bad blunder when I spoke of "the long weeks without hardly any sleep." I wish that were my only

mistake. However, the record for bad English is still held by a man who was not long ago a governor of one of our large States. He performed the unusual feat of making three grammatical errors in a sentence composed of two words. *Them's them!*

It is becoming increasingly common to discover bookshops where the proprietor not only knows books, but loves them. Formerly, if you went into other shops you could assume that the managers and the clerks knew something about the articles advertised for sale; but in most bookshops, it was impossible to find any one who had even an adumbration of knowledge. Things are improving. The ideal bookshop is Parker's, in Los Angeles, where the proprietor is a veritable host, knowing every item on the bill of fare. He sits up all night reading. Another good shop is Beach's, in Indianapolis; his favourite place for reading is the street-car, and he adds, "I forget to get off where I should. But that doesn't matter!" I sometimes wonder what the bookmen buy one-half so precious as the stuff they sell.

There is still room for improvement. A friend of mine recently entered a bookshop near Chicago, wishing to buy one of Shakespeare's plays, and the proprietor had never heard of the author.

Arthur S. Hildebrand has written a remarkable and true tale of adventure in *Blue Water*.

He and two friends bought a yawl in Scotland and sailed to the Isles of Greece, taking frequent and prolonged shore leave. The story would be interesting even if unskilfully told; but the book is more notable for its literary art than for the incidents. Mr. Hildebrand was graduated from Yale in the class of 1910, and this year has seen the publication of three novels by three of his classmates: *The Seven Hills*, by Meade Minnigerode; *Family*, by Wayland Williams; *Trodden Gold*, by Howard Vincent O'Brien—all three emphatically worth reading. The novelist Waldo Frank also really belongs to this class, for in 1910 he had completed the work for the B.A. degree; he preferred to be enrolled with 1911, and remained for an M.A.

Those who like a breathlessly exciting detective story will enjoy William Garrett's *Friday to Monday*, and will read it in much less time than that.

Nineteen twenty-three has been a notable year for the activity displayed by American novelists of established reputation. Edith Wharton, Zona Gale, Dorothy Canfield, Willa Cather, Elsie Singmaster, Ernest Poole, Joseph Lincoln, Ethel Kelley, Mary S. Watts, Herbert Quick, have all produced new novels of importance. With the one exception of *The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton's *A Son at the Front*, which appeared serially in *Scribner's Magazine*, is probably her best work; her command of style has never seemed more resourceful. The title should not

repel; it is not a son at the front, but a father somewhere else, who is the protagonist.

A new author, Alfred B. Stanford, shows such originality and power in *The Ground Swell* that I am already looking forward to his next book. He is, I believe, a pupil of the accomplished poet, dramatist, and critic, Stark Young.

Among new books from England John Galsworthy's collection of short stories, *Captures*, and the late Katherine Mansfield's *The Doves' Nest* are especially worthy of attention; both are marked by an economy of style that is one of the surest evidences of distinction. And Sheila Kaye-Smith has surpassed her best previous efforts in *The End of the House of Alard.*

The president of the University of Michigan made a sensational addition to his faculty for the present year in securing the Poet Laureate of England. Although I am not thrilled by the poems of Doctor Bridges, there is no more scholarly poet in the world, none more fitted to fill a university professorship. And there is no college anywhere that would not be honoured by his presence.

Browning's Pied Piper refuses to remain in the misty region of legend. Last year a piper appeared in Budapest, who, according to the press despatches, saved a section of the city from a plague of rats by bewitching the animals with music. Then the city authorities refused to pay the piper. Now the New York *Tribune* informs

me that a young veteran of the A. E. F., John Rogoff, is the Pied Piper of the East Side. Mr. Rogoff goes into a cellar, whistles in a peculiarly compelling fashion, and out come the rats. They stream towards him and eat from his hands. He gave a demonstration of his power to a sceptical observer, who, after counting seven rats in thirty seconds, incontinently fled. He was afraid, not of the beasts, but of the whistling. "It had a strange influence on him. He was afraid he'd get up and snatch a piece of bread himself."

To turn from music for rats to music for men, it is pleasant to note that Walter Damrosch is to celebrate the centenary of the Ninth Symphony by giving in order all the symphonies of Beethoven. The announcements for the year would convince any one that New York is the musical capital of the world. Among the vast number of distinguished visitors are Siegfried Wagner, Chaliapin, and Vladimir de Pachmann. The last-named has been giving out interviews that are of no importance except as amusing self-revelations. His opinions fortunately have nothing to do with his skill. He may be irritating, even maddening, when he talks; but I had rather hear him play Chopin than hear any one else. The late Mr. Huneker gave him a name that stuck—the Chopinzee.

The theatre season in New York will be at its height when these lines appear in print; I am

writing at my Michigan farm, where the most dramatic event thus far has been the annual separation of the sheep from their lambs. Both older and younger generation feel this acutely for exactly one night; then they forget all about it and proceed with their quotidian and eternal occupation—eating grass. This diet is not so monotonous as might at first thought appear; one blade of grass differeth from another in glory. Furthermore grass with a heavy morning dew and grass immediately after rain have entirely different flavours from grass in prolonged drought. It is like eating shredded wheat with and without cream. It is curious that sheep, wearing heavy woollen clothing, are so seldom thirsty; wool in sultry weather should produce a thirst. Now as a matter of fact sheep can live in a fair degree of comfort for three months without once taking a drink; and some farmers never water them during the winter, though it is better to do so. I asked a neighbour who keeps many sheep if he had ever seen one voluntarily drink; he never had. My sheep have access at any hour of the day or night in the summer-time to a creek; but not in thirty years have I ever seen one drinking.

But to reverse the proverb, let us turn away from our muttons. So far as I can judge by announcements and by reading dramatic criticisms, the season in New York will be like the city itself, containing the best and the worst things in America. Shakespeare will be the most popular playwright, as more of his plays will be acted

than those by any other author; Walter Hampden has a magnificent programme; Sothern and Marlowe will give among other productions, *Cymbeline*, which I once saw presented by Margaret Mather. Two interpretations of King Lear, by Schildkraut and by Warfield, are promised; John Barrymore will in every way revive *Hamlet; Measure for Measure* and *Antony and Cleopatra* are coming. I shall also be particularly interested in seeing Walter Hampden in the stage version of Browning's *The Ring and the Book*. Booth Tarkington has two successful plays now running, and Lee Wilson Dodd's *The Changelings*, with a remarkable cast, is an outstanding feature. On the other hand, there are some shows—a good name for them—that are so cynically defiant of decency that I have actually read rumours to the effect that many people have decided to stay away from the theatres altogether—a boycott that may become effective. No moralist's antagonism to the theatre has ever done the institution so much harm as that accomplished by those theatrical managers and producers who will apparently do anything for money. It is the traitor and not the open foe who injures any cause, and I say that all those concerned in the production of a play or spectacle that violates what is generally accepted as decency are traitors.

Outside of New York, the hope of dramatic art is in the Community Theatres and in the so-called Little Theatres. No city in America de-

serves more credit in this important work than Pasadena. The Pasadena Community Playhouse Association not only publishes an annual programme of plays produced, but a financial balance-sheet; and it has reason to be proud of both. It has survived six seasons, and in three years built up a membership from 42 to 1,442. In the summer, courses of instruction are given in everything pertaining to dramatic and histrionic work. The seventh season, 1923–1924, includes *Candida*, and during the past there have been played *King Lear*, *His House in Order*, *The Great Divide*, *The Yellow Jacket*, *Beyond the Horizon*, *Potash & Perlmutter*, *Strife*, and many others, the mention of which sufficiently illustrates both variety and excellence. Pasadena is a model, and I advise all communities who are interested to write to the Pasadena Community Playhouse Association.

The death of Franklin H. Sargent was a loss to the drama and a personal loss to me, for I always felt honoured by his friendship. In addition to directing an admirable academy for many years, it is owing to his efforts and example that so many universities and communities have had the impulse to produce Elizabethan drama. This general movement had its origin in Mr. Sargent's revival in 1895 of *The Silent Woman*, by Ben Jonson.

V

WHATEVER may be thought of the social status of other animals, there is no doubt that in recent years there has been an enormous advance in the prestige of the cat. The silent, graceful creature that Shylock (of all people) called affectionately the "harmless, necessary cat" has always been more or less petted by children; but men and women have often regarded him with aversion as a bird-murderer, or else as a selfish, stupid, somnolent nonentity. Then there are those who have a horror in his presence, similar to a more general feeling about snakes. But in the twentieth century the cat has begun to receive an increasing tribute of intellectual respect; he is the hero of books and stories; Sunday-supplement photogravures display his beauty. There is every evidence that at last the cat is coming into his own.

I view the social rise of the cat with elation, for I have always been an ardent idolater. Idolater is really the accurate word; and perhaps only those will understand my devotion in whom, as in me, the love of cats is inborn. I once heard a famous scientist in a public lecture say that most children are afraid of anything that has fur on it; and their fear, he declared, was owing to the fact that some forty thousand years ago furred animals were dangerous to the hairless

children, and a feeling therefore arose which had become instinctive, and persisted long after the reason for it had ceased to exist. This statement, like many that are uttered by scientific men, I heard with profound scepticism.

You see, my own earliest sensations were exactly the contrary. Not only did I have no fear of fur; anything that had fur on it I clasped to my infant bosom with delight. It is entirely impossible for me to explain or in any way to account for this passion. My father, my mother, and my aunt had not the remotest interest in cats, and would have been quite undisturbed had they known that they would never see one again. Yet I cannot remember the time when any cat, no matter how humble in origin and social position, failed to arouse in me breathless adoration. The sight of a dirty alley-cat plunged me instantly into a trance. My first motion on the restoration of consciousness and bodily activity was to attempt to induce the cat to accompany me home.

Many people, I am glad to say, love cats; but has any one had exactly these intimations of felinity in early childhood? The sickness or death of any of my long list of cats was to me a catastrophe. How shall I describe cat-worship? As a baby I loved cats so devotedly that any piece of fur was a religious symbol. My oldest brother had a fur hat; night after night I slept with it. I called it the cat-hat. My aunt had a tippet of ermine; I used to hug this article, and

kiss it frantically. My aunt was at first highly pleased to come into the room and find me kissing her ermine, because she thought it was proof of my love for her. She soon discovered it was nothing of the kind. I liked my aunt well enough, and she was always good to me; but when she asked me if I kissed the ermine because it reminded me of her, I shouted, with that sincerity characteristic of childhood, "No! no!" and kissing the fur with renewed vigour, I called it, "Kitty! pussy!" and other endearing terms. Even to-day, more than half a century after those early experiences, I secretly long to stroke every piece of fur I see. I do not doubt that many visitors thought that I was insane; perhaps they were right. Only if I was, I did not recover. In addressing those I loved I added "cat" to their names. Thus Alice I called Alicecat, Elizabeth, Lizcat, Olivia, Livcat, Madeleine, Madcat, and Helen, Hellcat.

I have always envied the professionals who enter the cages of lions and tigers; it must be wonderful to stroke a cat eight feet long. Such glorious tracts of fur!

The cat is the most beautiful and graceful of all domestic animals. His anatomy is precisely adapted to his needs; and although he takes only a hundredth as much exercise as a dog, he is always in perfect condition. Who ever saw a housemaid exercising a cat? There is no other beast who from a position of absolute relaxation can spring with accuracy and with no prelimi-

nary motion. He does not have to wind up like a baseball pitcher, or get "set"; he transmutes potential into kinetic energy with no visible effort, no more than a kingfisher's, only, instead of falling like the halcyon, he rises.

When a cat aims at the top of a fence or the surface of a table, he usually succeeds at the first attempt, unlike the dog, who tries five or six times and continues to try after the impossibility of attainment has been clearly demonstrated. The cat's economy of effort is as remarkable as his judgment of distance; you can not persuade him to try for any mark manifestly beyond his reach. The cat catches birds on the ground by outguessing them, and then by a motion swifter than wings; but if the bird rises in the air, the cat makes no attempt at pursuit, which he knows to be both futile and undignified; the dog, on the other hand, will chase after flying birds so long as he is able to run, although his percentage of hits is zero.

The amazing activity of the cat is delicately balanced by his capacity for relaxation. I believe that every household should contain a cat, not only for decorative and domestic values, but because the cat in quiescence is both a rebuke and an inspiration to irritable, tense, restless, and tortured men and women. In spite of the fact that there are a hundred books published every year in which human beings are told to "relax"—tremendous and continued energy seems to be required in order to keep quiet—

very few men, women, or children have mastered even the elementary principles of repose. The bodies of children and the minds of adults keep immobile only by conscious and continuous effort, which is a condition very different from rest; we try just as hard to rest as we try to keep going. I think it was in a famous book called *Power Through Repose* that I read the statement that when the ordinary mortal gets into bed, he does not really relax; he tries to hold the bed down. Many in bed will discover that they have their fists clenched.

Now when the cat decides to take his repose, he not only lies down; he pours his body out on the floor like water. It is restful merely to behold him. The average man looks up from the morning paper and roars at the folly and stupidity of our lawmakers; then he happens to see the family cat, who is either totally uninterested or, if thoughtful, is thinking only of breakfast. The cat seems to put to the householder every day the Emersonian question—*Why so hot, little man?*

But it is not the beauty and grace and agility and repose of the cat's body that are most admirable; what is most admirable is his intellectual and spiritual nature. It is often said by those who have no affection for cats that cats have no affection for people; but we who know cats know that this is a base slander. Some youth, trying to convince an old man that cats were without affection, remarked that the cat

has really no love; he loves you only because he wants to get something out of you. It isn't love. "Ah," said the old gentleman, "when you reach my age, you will call that love."

Of course I am devoted to dogs; and for the last thirty years there has always been in my house an Irish setter. But while the average dog is a good fellow and jolly companion, he does not compare in intellectual power with the cat. Not only is the cat gifted with an acute mind, he has a strong will and a patience that is almost divine. If the cat wishes to leave the room, he makes no fuss about it, but selects a position near the door; you may push him back twenty times, but although you can change his position you cannot change his purpose; his intention is to leave at the earliest opportunity, and he knows that opportunities come to those who are ready. He pretends a lack of interest and seems to have dismissed the subject from his mind, but if some one opens the door to enter, the cat departs.

The patience of the cat in hunting is one reason he seldom returns empty-clawed. The dog will show enthusiasm over a hole in the ground; he will bark, and dig madly with his paws; but unless something happens within five minutes, his excitement cools; he goes away and forgets all about it. If a cat decides that there is game in a certain spot, he does not give himself away by becoming frantic; he simply waits for the prey to make the first move, and he can outwait

any other living thing. In a house I lived in years ago, there was a hole in the floor close to the radiator; one day a mouse emerged from that orifice and was taken by an expectant cat. Years later, although I had seen no further signs of mice, my cat would sit down by that hole and watch it steadily for eight hours.

One reason men have always liked dogs is because the dog flatters men with such fawning servility; every man everywhere finds it extremely agreeable to be greeted by his dog with demonstrations of joy. But the devotion of the dog has been greatly exaggerated. What a dog really wants is excitement. He is easily bored, cannot amuse himself, and therefore demands entertainment. The dog's ideal is a life of active uselessness. That the dog is devoted only to his master is a colossal myth. He is devoted to any one who will do what he wants. I had to be thoroughly and repeatedly disillusioned before I would believe this. My first dog was a noble Irish setter who was apparently so devoted to me that he could not bear me out of his sight; he paid no attention to any one else, merely submitting to strangers' caresses; if I left the room for only a moment, he instantly rose and followed me. I was proud of this, and thought what a loyal, faithful creature he was. But one day I fell into a sickness, and had to stay in bed for two weeks. For an hour or so on the first day the dog remained in the room with me. Now there were other men in the house. One

of them took the dog for a walk, and alienated his affections. The dog never came near me until I had recovered and was able to entertain him again.

Even the famous "one-man dogs" are so only so long as they are fed by that one man. Among the instructions in the World War to those who used police dogs for professional duty was the command to allow no other person ever to feed the dog. A dog cannot be happy without human companionship, because he can neither hunt nor play by himself. A stranger with a gun can take any hunting-dog away from his gunless owner. The average dog loves amusement more than he loves any man; indeed he loves men because they provide him with that excitement which he finds necessary to happiness.

Yet there is something wrong with a man who does not love a dog. How can one help loving a creature who is so responsive, so demonstrative? Indeed I feel like a traitor in calling attention to his defects. Truth alone compels me to say that in dignity and neatness he does not compare with the cat. He is a bully good fellow; he leaps at you, places his muddy paws on your shirt-bosom, and is not satisfied after swimming unless he can shake himself on your impeccability. Indoors he wags his tail violently, cheerfully knocking down tables, vases, and various objects. The cat, on the other hand, shows his affection by rubbing gently against your ankles, and he will spring from a table to a nar-

row shelf covered with fragile objects without disturbing anything. His extraordinary mental and physical poise is shown by the fact that he can sleep with absolute assurance on the top of a fence only two inches broad, or even far aloft on the thin branch of a tree.

But the superiority of the cat is shown most strikingly in his intellectual resources. You may love a dog more, but the cat commands your respect. A dog has absolutely no resources; to a setter or a pointer, hunting is a consuming passion; it is indeed the *summum bonum;* but a dog will never hunt alone. He must have a man—he would far rather have an armed man with no game, than an abundance of game with no man. The cat, on the contrary, requires no more companionship than an owl, and is more than satisfied to hunt alone.

The cat demands no attention; his infinite capacity to keep still makes him excellent company. But a dog, as some observer has remarked, is always on the wrong side of the door.

A subtle and acute study of the cat appeared in *The Yale Literary Magazine*, some twenty-five years ago, and was written by an undergraduate, Ray Morris, who has since demonstrated his ability to write equally well on other themes. I have not succeeded in finding that article, but as I remember, Mr. Morris particularly emphasised the ability of the cat to entertain himself. In other words, he has an abundance of intellectual resources.

I have repeatedly observed this fact. (It may be that in my illustrations I am unwittingly stealing something from that undergraduate's essay.) If by some mischance you enter the house and the dog is left outside, he is in a tempest of nerves; he is frantic. He thinks he has lost you forever, and being unable to entertain himself, he scratches at the door, he barks and howls in heart-rending fashion. If, on the other hand, you kick the cat out of the house, he remains thoughtful a moment, as if to say: "Now I had planned to spend the afternoon indoors; but it is possible that it is more hygienic in the garden. At all events, I will select a quiet place to sleep until there are further developments."

My cats have all loved human society, and yet could get along without it. If I come downstairs in the middle of the night, the cat greets me with surprised and even rapturous purring. And if the cat suspects that I am going to leave town he does not leap upon me and beseech me to remain. He selects a place that he knows I must pass in order to quit the house, and there goes to sleep. If you are packing trunks preparatory to a long departure, and go out in the evening leaving a trunk half-packed, on your return you will find your cat asleep in that trunk; he knows that you will not go without it, and thus obtains both security and repose.

Every one has noticed the servility of the dog; poor fellow, he cannot be happy except in slav-

ery. To a man the greatest blessing is individual liberty; to a dog it is the last word in despair. Thus you can beat and kick a dog, and he clings to you even more ardently; but you cannot treat a cat except with respect, if you wish to keep him. The cat is essentially free, and needs no one; he has never been entirely tamed. The Egyptians, with their endless patience, were the only people who succeeded in making him into a domestic animal, and heaven only knows how many centuries they spent on the task.

I have always thought it unfortunate that dogs take no interest in washing themselves. It would be a help to them in passing the time. It is a constant resource to a cat. If there is nothing else going on, or if the cat is wakeful, he can always wash himself. To a cat self-washing is a means of cleanliness, an athletic exercise, a pastime, and a fine art. Sometimes it is almost a passion. I have seen a cat go into a frenzy of ablution. And how strange it is that with such a tongue, corrugated like an American niblick, heat should be so unendurable. A cat always waits for hot food to cool.

Cats have a sense of humour, as is shown in their extreme love of play. A middle-aged cat will often play as unreservedly as a kitten, though he knows perfectly well it is only a game. But even a kitten has a keen sense of humour. In Agnes Repplier's cat-essay, which I think is the best thing she ever wrote, she says the kitten will

climb swiftly up a table-cloth, and will then gaze down in comic terror at being so high.

In former times Germans, with their respect for efficiency, were extremely fond of dogs; for nearly every dog can be made useful. The Latins, on the other hand, with their love of beauty, are devoted to cats. The French, the Italians, the Spanish, the Portuguese all understand and appreciate cats. Siena is the greatest cat town I ever saw. As I walked along the streets of that interesting city I saw a cat on nearly every doorstep, and in many instances a grown man playing with him. Invariably I stopped and asked: "How old is your cat?" In nearly every case I received an immediate and definite answer, showing that the animal was esteemed.

Professor Henry R. Lang, the eminent scholar, calls my attention to an exceedingly interesting book, *Round the Calendar in Portugal*, by Oswald Crawfurd.

"That it takes a clever and urbane people to produce a race of well-grown and amenable domestic animals is proved by any number of instances; *e. g.*, by the case of the negroes of Eastern Africa, who apparently have domesticated no animals at all, and have only kept in unwilling and unthriving slavery those which Europeans have given them. I am told by a celebrated traveller in those parts, and an excellent observer, that when the negroes possess dogs, the animals are stupid beyond words; and such cats as they breed on the East Coast not only

partake of the unawakened intelligence of their masters, but are so neglected that their coats—a cat's chief beauty and care in life—have disappeared. The cats of Mombasa, Sir Richard Burton tells me, are hairless, having positively, poor creatures, nothing on them between their skins and the winds of heaven. . . .

"It is in this regard that Baron Cuvier no doubt regarded the dog as the greatest conquest that man had made. Perhaps the cat is a greater one. If that opinion is orthodox anywhere it is in this country, where the native cat, though he is a long-legged, long-nosed, lank-sided animal, has countervailing moral qualities; he is beyond all other cats companionable, teachable, clever, and amiable. There was recently in London an exhibition of trained cats who went through more wonderful performances than cats have ever been known to do before, for the lover of this quadruped must honestly admit that the ordinary 'trick cat' seldom acts up to the standard of his intelligence; a sturdy independence of character and a certain unamenability of disposition standing in his way. One secret of the extraordinary success of the cats' professor, whose name I cannot recall, was let out by himself—*all his best cats came from Portugal.*

"Now if the present writer seems in the following pages to disparage the race of dogs in favour of that of cats, it is not that he holds dogs lower than the other lovers of them, having possessed several excellent friends who had tails to wag, but that he thinks cats have been unduly condemned. Moreover, the brief held by him is

for the Portuguese cat, a creature, as suggested above, eminent among his race. . . .

"Rather than consort with a bully or a villain, a ruffian or a sneak, the cat will part company with his owner; and, scrupulously cleanly himself, the cat loves those only who are as scrupulous as himself in this respect. Rather than live with persons who fail to come up to his standard, morally or physically, he will abandon the house and take to the woods. Therefore a man's companionship with cats is as good as a certificate of character to him.

"It takes perception keener than is common to interpret the language of the cat, the often silent language of his looks and attitudes. The dog, on the other hand, is demonstrative, any casual person can guess what he means; but he is far too often over-demonstrative, and his heart often gets the credit of what is often nothing but foolish sentimental gush. The dog is greedy, and sudden in wrath, and can place no restraint upon his anger or his voracity. The cat, on the other hand, is a model of abstemiousness and can keep his temper. When it comes to propriety of behaviour and good manners, all comparison is absurd. Suffice it to say that Mahomet, who (whatever we may think of his politics and his religion) was a gentleman of perfect manners, loved the cat for his refinement, and despised the dog for his want of any."

You can guess what a dog is thinking about and what he will do next, both of which divinations fail with the cat. The cat has such a pa-

trician reserve that when he does show you affection it is enormously flattering. You order a dog to come to you, and the more angrily you shout the more quickly he comes, but you must plead with a cat and say in the most ingratiating manner: "Come, kitty, kitty, kitty!" And then often the cat will look at you steadily and proceed unhurriedly to walk in the opposite direction.

It is often said that the dog is more intelligent than the cat, because you can teach the former more tricks. The fact is really evidence for the cat. When you command a dog to "sit up," the poor idiot thinks he has to do it. The average cat throws off, pretends to be stupid and not to understand what you want. He really understands you too well, but he sees "nothing in it" for him. Why sit up?

But cats are, alas, as mortal as dogs. It may be they have nine lives, but, as George Stanleigh Arnold said, it is always the ninth one which they lose.

An extremely interesting book has just been published in Scotland. It is a new edition of Ben Jonson's *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, prepared and annotated by Doctor R. F. Patterson. The text of the *Conversations* is given completely and accurately, and the editor's introduction alone is worth the price of the book. The notes that Drummond made in 1619 of these apparently chance conversations are the chief basis for our knowledge of

Jonson's life, and they are invaluable for his comments on contemporary persons.

I wish I knew what impelled Ben Jonson to make that northward journey. He was forty-six years old, and weighed two hundred and seventy-eight pounds. Over wretched roads he went on foot from London to Edinburgh, heaven knows why. Perhaps he wished to "reduce." What a pity he did not keep a diary of that pilgrimage! How interesting it would be for its comments on the road, on taverns, on town and country, on everything. My chief regret in reading the Elizabethan writers is always concerned with just those omissions. If some one had taken two hours of a rainy afternoon and written his personal recollections of William Shakespeare, or if, as Bernard Shaw suggests, Shakespeare had only written a preface to one of his plays!

Jonson's casual remarks to Drummond are extraordinary in their candour, and in their authority. He speaks of many famous personages, from Queen Elizabeth to proletarian hack-writers. Nine times he alludes to his great contemporary, the lyrical poet and theologian, John Donne. Inasmuch as Donne's poetry has never stood so high in critical estimation as in 1924, these allusions are precious. Some years ago a London journalist, James Douglas, predicted that Browning would die, "even as Donne is dead," because of his roughness and obscurity. The prediction seems as fatuous as the comparison. If there is any English poet brilliantly

alive in the twentieth century, it is the Dean of St. Paul's, John Donne, who flourished three hundred years ago. Jonson told Drummond that Donne deserved to die, but he knew well enough that he never would. "Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging." But Jonson also said to his Scotch friend, that he esteemed John Donne "the first poet in the world, in some things."

Donne's reputation is higher in 1924 than it was in 1900. About that time I delivered a public lecture on him, and I regret to say that the official bulletin of the university where I was to speak announced that the lecture would be delivered by John Donne, the Dean of St. Paul's. I began by telling the audience that the dean was unavoidably absent, and was much mortified.

American scholars to-day pronounce his name "done," and English scholars "don." We are right; it is the same name as Dunn, it is in Jonson's conversations spelled "Done," and the poet himself punned in that fashion on his name.

In spite of Jonson's coarseness, boasting, and dogmatism, no one can read these conversations without admiring him; he was a man. Strange indeed is the likeness between him and his eighteenth-century namesake. Both were kings of contemporary literature and acted like it; both believed in the authority of Greek and Latin classics; both had enormous bodies; both had a Scotch biographer; both loved convivial gatherings, loved to talk with their peers; both were

honest, sincere, virile, and generous. The annals of literature cannot show a finer tribute from one rival to another than that paid by Jonson to Shakespeare.

By the way, I saw in a newspaper a while ago that some person was ridiculed for the spelling Ben *Johnson*, and the critic caustically inquired: How would it look spelled *O rare Ben Johnson?* I know exactly how it would look, for I have seen it in Westminster Abbey; it looks like this: *O rare Ben Johnson.*

Both Johnsons knew the Bible, and from obliging correspondents I have lately received some interesting figures. Sam J. Rucker, Jr., of El Paso, writes me of an astonishing feat of memory performed by a genial Texan:

"Lately you have written of some one who read the New Testament in a few hours' time and ask of others who have read it a number of times. Probably you would be interested in the case of Doctor W. B. Hogg, pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, El Paso, Texas, former 'Sunshine Chaplain' with the A. E. F., who has been and is threatened with blindness as a result of injuries received in overseas service, and who, wishing to carry certain faces, scenes, and passages from literature and scripture, is memorising them. To date he has memorised the New Testament and most of the Old. Also he is keeping up his pastorate remarkably well. This year he has conducted several revivals, in the last month

preaching every day, and has added six hundred members to his church in the past year. He has had his church establish a 'soup kitchen' for the hungry which runs all the time, and an orphanage. His total church-membership is about twenty-four hundred now, I think. As an orator, I have rarely heard his equal, and he is a friend of the sick. So you see he is not a freak."

William M. Langdon, of West Asheville, North Carolina, informs me that in his neighbourhood there is an old lady who reads the entire Bible through every month, and a young lady who last spring read it through in six days. I hope she rested on the seventh. I congratulate them both.

Mrs. S. W. Shoup, of San José, California, reminds me of the astounding feat of little Susan Hayes Ward, member of a distinguished family. Before she was eleven years old, she read the whole Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek, three times. "Her father had a theory that Hebrew is easier than Greek, and Greek than Latin, therefore children should be taught these languages in a reverse order from that usually employed."

This story is undoubtedly true, but as it will seem to some of my readers more incredible than anything in the Bible itself, let us change the subject.

I was very glad to receive from William O. Inglis the following tribute to the greatest prize-

fighter of all time—a man who was as honest as Ben Jonson, as athletic as Samson, and who had, like the Biblical hero, one weakness, which he overcame before it overcame him.

"Making due allowance for the bias of the hero-worshipper, let me declare that John L. was one of the most honest men that ever lived. His mind went always on a straight line to the core of any matter. Witness his simple yet comprehensive credo: 'I can lick any man that was ever born of woman!' And he realised it up to the last contest—the one you were asked to 'read by rounds.' I was there. . . . Before complete consciousness was restored he broke from his handlers, raised the mighty right that had vanquished thousands, and said: 'I have nothing at all to say: all I have to say is that I came into the ring once too often, and if I had to get licked, I'm glad I was licked by an American. I remain your warm and personal friend, John L. Sullivan.' I say nothing of the wet eyes at the ringside. (Of course, the true fight fans are a lot of Sentimental Tommies, or they wouldn't be there.) And honest old John stuck to it; never made an excuse or plea to his dying day.

"Do you know that he spent his last twelve years bone-dry? After wasting his substance in riotous living he stopped because, as he explained to a friend: 'I want to marry a lady—and she is a lady—and she has no use for a booze-fighter, and I'm showing her I'm no booze-fighter. I haven't had a drink in one year, three months,

and sixteen days.' (Each tear a pearl; each pearl a prayer.) She kept him waiting two dry years. They had ten years of happiness. She soon followed him to the grave. He did a monologue in the Keith houses, always urging total abstinence, until the management ordered that feature dropped because prohibition, etc., was too bitterly controversial for their stage. He made no protest; simply refused to appear unless he could talk temperance, and spent his very last years in straitened circumstances. No protest. He never knew how to whimper. (Oh, if there were only room here to tell you of the royal way he accepted his last Christmas turkey, concerning which his friends had to go about with him most guilefully, to get his consent!)

"But he was so big. Up to the time he stopped, Gargantua was a child beside him. His manager told me of his drinking fifty-six gin fizzes in one hour—'and I know there were fifty-six; for I kept count and paid the bill,' he said. Yet when he stopped he stopped."

The New York *Sun* said that Sullivan used in his speeches the epistolary style, often concluding, "Yours truly, John L. Sullivan."

Can any of my readers give me the name of either of these novels? I read one when I was a child, and one when I was a youth, and I have forgotten the names of the authors, the titles of the stories, the plots, and the characters. I remember only one sentence from each book, and they seem to me worth remembering:

1. "She went to school in the afternoon, carrying four fat raisins in her pocket, two to be eaten during the grammar lesson, and two during the geography lesson."
2. "At this point the dog Jabez started to suppress an insurrection in his flea colony."

I like the first because of her careful planning —a future Hoover in food distribution. The horrible afternoon must be endured somehow, and she knew in advance exactly what she had to face and how best to face it. The other sentence—oh, well, anybody would like that.

VI

In meditating the other day on one of the most familiar lines in Tennyson:

An infant crying in the night,

I decided that insufficient attention had been given to it by physiologists, phonologists, music-teachers, elocutionists, singers, and public speakers. Even those men and women who are fortunate enough to possess, like Marion Crawford's Roman singer, a throat of iron, do not dare to shout and shriek continuously for the space of two hours; whilst the average adult, if he roared for fifteen minutes, would probably be hoarse for two days, and might seriously, perhaps permanently, injure his vocal cords. Yet a tender infant, with a throat as soft as water, can yell all night fortissimo, and not only do himself no injury, but in the morning be fresh as a fox-hound, and not only be able, but quite willing, even eager, to continue. What is the secret of the baby's voice production? It seems to be a matter worth serious investigation. In emission of tone the infant unconsciously has a system that makes the Italian method appear crude. If singing masters could discover what it is, and

teach it, all present methods of vocal study would be revolutionised.

In addition to my other enterprises, such as the founding of the Fano Club, Faerie Queene Club, and the Ignoble Prize, I now undertake the organisation of the Asolo Club. Individuals will qualify by visiting Asolo and sending me a picture post-card from that delectable mountain. Very few Americans go to Asolo, yet no town is more easily reached, provided one first reaches Italy. Every one who sees Italy visits Venice. The tourist may breakfast in Venice, spend the day in Asolo, and dine in Venice at the conventional evening hour. In the year 1838, a twenty-six-year-old English pedestrian, named Robert Browning, climbed the little mountain and gazed with rapture on the tiny town of Asolo. Enchanted with the place, it haunted his memory, and there he laid the scenes of *Pippa Passes*. At the age of seventy-seven, in the year 1889, he spent the summer there, bought a house, in which he intended to live in subsequent summer seasons; but in the following December he died in Venice. His last volume of poems, published on the day of his death, was called punningly *Asolando*, and was dedicated to Katharine Bronson, the charming American woman who lived in Asolo. On 7 May 1912, the centenary of Browning's birth was elaborately celebrated in the town immortalised by Pippa; and the street on which Browning lived in 1889 had its name for-

mally changed to *Via Roberto Browning*. His son, incurably ill, was the chief personage at the centenary exercises, and died two months later in the house bought by his father. One of his pious deeds was to purchase the old silk-mill, where Pippa worked, and found there a charity lace school, in honour of the poet.

We visited Asolo in 1904, and looking on the names registered in the queer old book at the inn, I found only one American—and that was Maud Watrous, who lived directly across the street from us in New Haven! She is now the wife of a gallant English officer, Colonel Grazebrook, but if by any chance she should see these lines, she will discover that she is a charter member of the Asolo Club, and entitled to all its rights and privileges. For membership is retroactive.

I owe the founding of this club to Sarah Redington, of Santa Barbara, who had previously qualified for Fano membership. On October 24, she, accompanied by Frances Taylor of San Francisco, entered the sacred precincts of Asolo, where with appropriately solemn ceremonies they established this flourishing institution, which already contains a half-dozen members, and as soon as this issue of *Scribner's Magazine* begins to circulate, will rapidly gather accretions. Miss Redington writes: "We came to it as Browning pilgrims, but we love it for itself, and think Browning's affection for it more than natural—it was inevitable. Once visited, Asolo must always remain in one's memory as the most

adorable hill town in the world. Of course you will be President of the Asolo Club. That is our one stipulation. We take it for granted that the motto of the Fano Club, as you announced it in Los Angeles that July morning—'no dues, no initiation fees, no assessments'—will hold good in this sister society. . . . No Browning enthusiast can afford *not* to make this pilgrimage—which, incidentally, is not a difficult one, even if the little town *is* off the railway. A good public motor-bus from Castelfranco solves the problem of transportation for the tourist who is not travelling in his own car, and an excellent Italian inn (*Albergo al Sole*) makes his stay a comfortable and well-fed one."

Elizabeth N. Case, the accomplished literary critic of the Hartford *Courant*, not only joins the Faerie Queene Club, but nominates emphatically for the Ignoble Prize Carlyle's *French Revolution*. She has made five valiant attacks upon it, and been repulsed five times with severe losses. The Manchester *Guardian*, commenting on my September article in *Scribner's*, thinks I am mistaken in believing that Carlyle's works are to-day widely read; that admirable journal believes the world is far more interested in reading about Carlyle than in reading him. Which may be true; yet very few persons can graduate from Yale without reading him, for it is compulsory in the English course of freshman year. I will now confess that I have never read through the *French Revolution;* I well remember beginning to

do so, and the late Professor Ralph Catterall of Cornell—one of the best teachers of history in America—telling me that I should never finish it. "No one does," said he.

But the personality of Carlyle is as compellingly interesting as ever. There has just been published the first volume of what I believe will be the most important biography of our day—*Carlyle Till Marriage*, by David Alec Wilson. Mr. Wilson has spent thirty years collecting material about Carlyle, and this initial tome is to be the first of five. Upon the conclusion of the work Thomas Carlyle will emerge more completely than Johnson from the pages of Boswell. Mr. Wilson has a genius for detail and a passion for accuracy. Many legends are discredited, and every statement of fact is carefully and elaborately documented. If Carlyle met a girl on the street and smiled at her, the fact is supported by three footnotes. Does this meticulous method make the book dull? On the contrary, I have yet to find a single dull sentence, either in the pages or in the fine print at their feet. Mr. Wilson writes with such gusto that he keeps up his own and his reader's courage; his style is such a compound of enthusiasm, shrewdness, cynicism, and humour that I find myself led captive. If he lives to finish this vast undertaking, I predict that he will take his place among the great biographers.

The year 1923 should be memorable for an astonishing number of "autobiographies," "rec-

ollections," and "reminiscences." I cannot remember any previous twelvemonth that can be compared with it. Here are a few of them: *From Immigrant to Inventor*, by Michael Pupin, which first appeared in the pages of *Scribner's Magazine*, and which is assuredly a valuable contribution to human nature in general and to Americanisation in particular. It is an extraordinary record. *Remembered Yesterdays*, by Robert Underwood Johnson, poet, editor, diplomat, is crowded with interesting anecdotes and good stories; the author's long service as editor of the *Century Magazine* and his connexion with the American Academy made him the intimate friend of distinguished men and women in every land. *From Pinafores to Politics*, by Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, copiously illustrated, is full of good talk and exciting incidents. *Tales of Travel*, by the Marquess Curzon, and *The Story of My Life*, by Sir Harry H. Johnston, are crowded with thrilling adventures. *My Windows on the Street of the World*, two thick volumes, by Professor James Mavor, will hold the attention of all intelligent readers, and will make others wish they were intelligent. *The World Crisis*, by The Right Honourable Winston S. Churchill, is as lively and irritating as its author. *My Note-Book at Home and Abroad*, by Harry De Windt, who says he has travelled over a million miles, about ten thousand without steam, and has lived in every capital of Europe, is exactly what one might expect from the author's preface. *Myself*

Not Least, Being the Personal Reminiscences of X, is a succession of good stories told by an expert. *Memories of the Russian Court*, by Anna Virobova, is as entertaining as it is something else, and it is assuredly both. *Celebrities: Little Stories About Famous Folk*, by Coulson Kernahan, is charming in its candour, modesty, and naïveté. His account of the Edwin Drood trial, where the judge was G. K. Chesterton, and Bernard Shaw foreman of the jury, is unforgettable; and I shall not forget the conversation between the beloved Ian Maclaren and an Italian peasant woman. She asked him if he ever prayed to the Mother of God, and on receiving a courteous negative reply, she said: "Ah, sir, I understand that, but you are a man, and you don't know how a woman needs a woman to pray to!"

One of the most light-hearted of all these biographies is that by Douglas Ainslie, called *Adventures Social and Literary*, in which the author tells the story of his youth and of his diplomatic career. Here is a man who has always moved, by right of birth, breeding, and education, "in the best circles." He is such a snob that his frankness is disarming; his assurance adds considerably to the amusement of the reader; and he himself seems to have had no end of fun. He hates democracy, and says so candidly. He believes that no one has the right to be called a "gentleman" unless—but let him talk, for such words make a strange accompaniment to the scream of the American eagle. "What is a gen-

tleman? The significance of the word seems to vary with the speaker. I cling to the old acceptation that it should and does mean a man belonging to a certain group of families with pedigree and certain traditions. A gentleman can be a criminal and yet remain a gentleman, because he can't help it. The notion of a nature's gentleman seems to me to represent an attempt to steal the prestige that hangs around the name of gentleman and to apply it incorrectly to the possessor of certain moral and intellectual qualities. Why not call the latter a 'good' or a 'clever' man and remain true to the proper use of language?" All I can say is, "Golly! what a book!" It sounds as though it had been written before the year 1789.

I am amused to read such language from an indubitable swell. But it is not particularly amusing to read what he says on one of the greatest statesmen and noblest characters in modern history, John Morley, whose integrity matched his intellect. It is, however, significant; because it shows that a chronic consciousness of high birth may produce petrifaction of the brain. It hardly seems possible that John Morley, whom Henry James called the most distinguished of living Englishmen, could be the object of such an appraisal as this: "Another politician, at one time intimate with my uncle, was Mr. John Morley (now a Viscount, as all good Radicals should be). Morley had followed Gladstone on the Home Rule question, and thereby made sure

of his peerage and higher office. It was a public calamity when he was made secretary of state for India. I have it from a foreign diplomatist, now an Allied ambassador, who had much state business at the India Office, that the whole of his policy was disastrous to the maintenance of British authority in that great country." Well, honesty is sometimes disastrous both to authority and to greed.

When he is not talking about gentlemen or politics, Mr. Ainslie is often more entertaining. He adds some excellent stories to the vast number already encircling the figure of Oscar Wilde. Here is one, which despite the narrator's howling blunder, is worth remembering. It happened when Wilde was an undergraduate at Oxford, taking his oral exam. "He was put on to construe from the Greek of the New Testament, at the verse of St. Matthew which records the sale of the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver by Barabbas. (SIC!) Wilde, who got a First in Greats and taught Mrs. Langtry Latin, construed a few verses rapidly and correctly. The examiner interrupted: 'Very good, that will do, Mr. Wilde.' 'Hush, hush,' replied the candidate, raising an admonitory finger, 'let us proceed and see what happened to the unfortunate man.'"

In addition to these just mentioned, and to those on which I commented in previous issues of *Scribner's Magazine*, one should particularly read Walter Damrosch's *My Musical Life;* it is

not only an excellent autobiography, it shows clearly how New York has become the world's musical capital. Observe also the *Memoirs of Alexander Herzen*, the great Russian critic, whose complete autobiography is now for the first time being made available in English. *A Mid-Victorian Pepys*, being the letters and memoirs of Sir William Hardman, annotated and edited by S. M. Ellis, is steadily entertaining, most so when not meant to be, as will be seen from the following, under date of January 1862: "So we are to have no war with these infernal Yankees this time. I am sorry for it, and in this I find my feelings are not unusual, for the prevailing views among all with whom I am brought into contact are, that we could not do better than give Yankeedom a thorough licking, and that such a fight must come off sooner or later. I remark that our strenuous preparations for war have *rather* smitten the Jonathans with a sort of abject terror. There is no doubt about it, we put them in a precious funk. It has put us to great expense in perfecting our military and naval condition, but it has enabled us to throw a compact army of 10,000 men into Canada."

In addition to all these autobiographies, I am filled with feverish expectancy by a book that has just arrived: *W. S. Gilbert. His Life and Letters*, by Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey. Is the motley in the authorship symbolical? It has many illustrations and, best of all, an enormous number of verses. Why cannot we have a re-

vival of the complete cycle of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas? Their wit and tunefulness are imperishable; and their reproduction would make our musical comedies seem almost as inane as they actually are.

Burns Mantle, the accomplished dramatic critic, has recently issued his fourth annual volume, *The Best Plays of* 1922–1923. I advise lovers and students of contemporary drama to buy this book, and its three predecessors, for they form a complete and accurate history of the American stage during the period covered. The present theatrical season in New York—there is none elsewhere in America—is particularly brilliant. The outstanding event is the revival of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, by Walter Hampden. The greatest drama of modern times, produced and acted by one of the most gifted artists in the world, makes a combination that has been received with tremendous enthusiasm. It is a glorious performance, worth travelling across the continent to see. The translation was made especially for this production by the American poet Brian Hooker, and seems to be admirably adapted for the voice. Other plays that adorn this season are *The Changelings*, by Lee Wilson Dodd, an original, thoughtful, challenging, brilliant American comedy, produced to the absolute satisfaction of eye and ear by Henry Miller. Associated with him are Blanche Bates, Laura Hope Crews, Ruth Chatterton, and others, whose

intelligence and enunciation make the dialogue as exciting as action in a melodrama. The tempo of the play is perfectly sustained. *The Swan*, a romantic comedy by Molnar, has captured New York, and deserves its success. It is a charming piece, and the acting of the cast is on a level with that of the best stock companies of Europe. Not so much can be said of the Theatre Guild's choice and production of Galsworthy's *Windows*. I am an enthusiastic member of the Guild, and an enthusiastic admirer of Galsworthy; but nothing can disguise the fact that *Windows* is a feeble play, indifferently acted. Jane Cowl, emboldened by the immense success of her interpretation of Juliet, has had the courage to produce Maeterlinck's *Pélléas and Mélisande*, and indeed it took courage, because the play has appalling difficulties, and because Maeterlinck is just now extremely unpopular in America. He was a great name until he came hither to lecture; after that disastrous experience the majority of Americans made up their minds that he was a writer of no importance, and in America all such things are settled by majority vote. That a failure in lecturing should destroy the literary value of *Monna Vanna*, *Pélléas*, *Sister Béatrice*, and *The Blue Bird* would seem incomprehensible if it were not a fact. Most American "critics" simply repeat what it is fashionable to say: Maeterlinck is an old wind-bag; Alfred Noyes never wrote a line of poetry, and so on. Jane Cowl, however, has scored an artistic success in the

Belgian play; whether it will hold the stage for a long run is not now discoverable.

The Moscow players are with us again, and are no less wonderful, delighting their audiences and satisfying the most difficult critics. They have added new plays to their repertoire, and are apparently as successful in light comedy as in grey tragedy. It is curious that out of Ibsen's works they should have chosen *An Enemy of the People*, but they certainly did well with it. Perhaps on their next visit they will take an American play.

Eleonora Duse also came over, and played to enormous and enthusiastic audiences. She gave the worst performance of Ibsen's *Ghosts* I have ever seen. Not one thrill did I receive from her impersonation of Mrs. Alving. She was mechanically perfect; her movements, gestures, voice, technically correct, and lifeless.

> Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
> Dead perfection.

Not for one second was I under any illusion, under any spell; I simply watched a well-oiled automaton. As for the others, the only satisfactory one was Pastor Manders; the rest were either insignificant or bad. The conclusion was doubly ruined, first by the scene between Oswald and his mother, and secondly by the weirdest sun that ever shone. As if to forestall future elocutionists, Ibsen put in the stage direction that Oswald must speak in a dull, toneless voice; by

the lack of expression expressing horror unspeakable. But just as so many actresses who essay Lady Macbeth love to show off in the sleep-walking scene, thus demonstrating that whoever may be asleep in the audience, the Lady is not, so actors who play Oswald love to put horror in their tones when its absence is most horrible. When I heard Antoine play the rôle in Paris, he spoiled the final effect by saying pathetically, *Donne-moi le soleil*, like a child crying for food. In Madame Duse's production, Oswald implored and besought his mother to give him the sun, thus destroying the effect that Ibsen explicitly wished to produce. Oswald in this instance was no crazier than the sun. Why have a sun? The increasing light of dawn is all that is necessary. But in the Duse production a roundish, yellowish ball came up jerkily in a heavily wrinkled sky; the men who were pulling it off stage lacked the rudiments of team-play, for some seemed to haul against determined opposition, so that the result looked like a tug of war, with the sun for prize. The conservatives, who did not wish it to rise at all, nearly got it once. Such a perverse sun would have discredited a scratch team of players in a district school. I wish David Belasco could have seen it. For his production of *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* had the most marvellous light ever seen on the stage. There were no side-lights, spot-lights, or foot-lights; Mr. Belasco has discovered a new method, that gives a diffused light indistinguishable from

the light of day. The sunshine filtered through the trees exactly as it would on a summer afternoon, and the sky had no wrinkles; the only unwrinkled sky I have ever seen in the theatre.

In New Jersey, the Burlington County Historical Society has done a fine thing in purchasing the house in the town of Burlington, 457 High Street, where on 15 September 1789, James Fenimore Cooper was born. The house is filled with Cooperiana, the novelist's grandson contributing a remarkable manuscript. On 23 November, the birthplace was formally dedicated, and despite torrents of rain there was a large attendance and great fervour. I was not only deeply interested in the Cooper home and in the old Quaker meeting-house, but in the building next door to Cooper's, where Captain James Lawrence was born, 1 October 1781. Let me recommend to motorists a visit to Burlington. Kenneth A. Robinson, of Dartmouth, writes me: "My grandfather was a graduate of Yale in the class of 1835, and I have often heard him tell how he and some other students tried to get the Phi Beta Kappa society there to bring, or at least invite, Cooper to New Haven to lecture, only to have their proposal repeatedly rejected by the officers of the society on the ground that Cooper 'wrote novels.'"

Americans are usually good story-tellers, as distinguished from conversationists. I use the

latter word on the prompting of Ernest Ingersoll, who suggests that it is a better form than conversationalist. And so it is. I suppose there never was a more entertaining teller of stories than the late Gordon McCabe, of Virginia, who during his life of eighty years gave an immense amount of pleasure to an immense number of people. He was my ideal of a Southern gentleman, brave, courteous, witty, kindly, with a nice sense of honour. His conversations with Tennyson were interesting. He told the aged poet some of his best Southern anecdotes, which made him a welcome guest in Tennyson's home. On one occasion Tennyson grew confidential and told McCabe something about his own history, and then rather gruffly remarked that he hoped McCabe would not print this in any newspaper. McCabe instantly replied that in the country whence he came such a remark would be regarded as an insult, and the poet immediately apologised. Observing that Tennyson smoked all the time, McCabe asked him if he had ever tried Bull Durham, the Old Reliable; he had not, but liked the sample given him by the Virginian. Accordingly McCabe used to send him a bale of Bull Durham every year, which the poet quickly consumed.

Gordon McCabe, like the gallant young gentleman he was, fought in the Confederate Army, and could not at first swallow the oath of allegiance to the United States after the war, for which I personally admire him. Only the other

day I received an extremely interesting letter from one of McCabe's fellow-soldiers, G. Nash Morton, who writes:

"Gordon was a charming personality, a most entertaining and delightful companion. After Lee's surrender, when a number of Lee's officers, who in one way or another had escaped capitulation, were making their way to join General Johnston at Greensboro, N. C., I came into the most intimate touch with Gordon. Having been cut off from Lee on the night before the 9th of April by Sheridan's cavalry, which had swung in between us and Lee's main army, marching on another road, at sunrise on the morning of the 9th we received word from Lee that he was about to surrender. But as we were cut off from him, he had not included us in his cartel, and that we could either surrender with him or not, just as we pleased. I set out immediately to join Johnston. In doing so I had to pass my home, 'Gravel Hill,' in Charlotte, the adjoining County to Appomattox. Delayed there a couple of days arranging a new horse and valet to replace the one I had left behind, Gordon and Maj. McGraw turned up with Lieut. Hannah, my cousin. . . . We all joined company and went in a body to Greensboro. It was there that Gordon's splendid qualities shone forth in all their brilliancy. Arriving at Greensboro, we reported for service to General Johnston, who told us that just then he had nothing for us to do, but that we might camp near him, and draw our rations. If he needed us, he would call on

us. We learned afterwards that he was already negotiating with Sherman for surrender. Gordon was our spokesman with Johnston. When the latter asked him what was Lee's position at Richmond and Petersburg before leaving them, and Gordon had explained it to him, he said, "I am surprised he stayed there so long." Whatever President Davis and Congress might have wished or said, Johnston would have left the two cities to their fate and have saved his army while there was an opportunity to save it. Lee, on the contrary, always bowed to the civic authorities. He knew as well as Johnston when his position became untenable, and no doubt he had made it known to the authorities. But Richmond, not Petersburg, in its mad whirl of pleasure and frolic, was blind to its fate, and believed that Lee could work miracles and would never give up the capital.

"During our stay in Greensboro, we witnessed an incident which thrilled even such experienced soldiers as we were. A mob gathered around the building where the quartermaster and commissary stores were housed. As the mob pressed nearer and nearer and seemed more and more threatening, the young soldier in charge whirled a keg of powder to the door, smashed in the head with a hatchet, called to his assistant to bring him the poker which he had been heating in the stove, and brandishing its glowing tip over his head, he said, 'You people had better get away from here. If you press any nearer, I will blow up the house and everybody near it.' They saw that he meant business and retired.

"One day General Johnston informed us that

he intended to surrender the next day. We bade him good-by, mounted our horses and turned homeward. Gordon, as usual, was the life of our party."

Mr. Morton enclosed the following letter from McCabe, written in April 1865:

"My dear Nash:

"[Although I do not know when there will be an opportunity of sending this, still I can't refrain any longer from inflicting a letter upon you, albeit you have done nothing worthy of such harsh treatment from me.

"Well, old boy, I miss you a great deal, and I'd love to have some of our chats and rides and walks over again. I'm not given to saying complimentary things or I sh'd put down something to your 'credit side' in speaking of my charming visit to 'Gravel Hill' but that sort of thing sounds insincere on paper, and besides 'you ought to know,' as the dear young ladies are wont to say.

"Well, I've been paroled but I have, at present, no idea that I could stand up and swallow the 'Oath.' I feel more like spitting out one—a real, round old cavalier oath—such as Rupert or 'wild George Goring' swore at the 'Puritan curs.' Everybody here, however, is taking it, nor do I think a man ought to refuse when he is going to remain in the country. After all it is a question for every man to settle for himself.

"My intention of going abroad remains unchanged, and I trust by the blessing of God to

be able to sail by October. I propose going first to England, and if I cannot find employment there, thence to Australia. How much I would love to have you as my *compagnon de voyage!* A cool head and a brave heart are good to have by one's self—pshaw! how awkward! I mean, are good in a companion! In short, old fellow, when I wrote that balderdash I meant to express my deliberate conviction that your headpiece is pretty level, and that you aren't the greatest coward in the world, and that I wish you'd go with me.

"Now write me about that famous school, and tell me what you propose doing. You haven't proposed to the fair maid of Roxabel, have you? Alas! poor Yorick! these one-legged men are terrible fellows. Now give my warm regards to Judge Marshall's family, and remember in counting up your friends that you have none who love you more sincerely and heartily than

GORDON MCCABE."

In one respect, at least, Joseph Conrad is unlike Henry James. The latter became more and more difficult as he advanced in years, so that some of his latest writings, *The Outcry*, for example, are for the average reader an impenetrable thicket. Conrad, on the other hand, seems to increase in amenity. Surely his latest novel, *The Rover*, is, with the possible exception of *Victory*, the "easiest" of all his books. Although written by a seafaring man about a seafaring man, the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err

therein. This is a story of the south of France in the Napoleonic era, and the interest is concentrated on a single character, who is one of Conrad's greatest creations. The idea of sacrifice which is fundamental in Conrad's novels—one has only to recall *The Rescue* and *Under Western Eyes*—is here again dominant; nothing could be more splendidly serene than the way in which the old sea-dog steers towards death. We had learned to love him before this final incident; but nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it. The dignity of style which marks every book by Conrad is here also notable; it furnishes a reason for his superiority to most of his contemporaries.

Like Browning, Ibsen, and Wagner, Joseph Conrad finally won his public without making any compromises; for the superior clarity of the sentences in *The Rover* has no similarity to any sort of "writing down." The old jokes about Conrad are heard no more. Was it F. P. A. who used to call his admirers the Conradicals, and insist that the novelist was unreadable? Was it the same man who put one of his novels against the wall, shot it with a revolver, and found that the bullet had failed to get through the first chapter?

There is only one of Conrad's novels unworthy of him, though he would never admit it. This is *Victory*, which won him a new public. I cannot swallow Mr. Jones, who seems to me just the languid, bored villain whom I have encoun-

tered as frequently in melodrama as infrequently in life.

In a previous issue I said that I had never heard of Sarah Smith, or of her novel, *The Doctor's Dilemma*. Well, just as I expected, I have since heard several times of both. I am informed that the famous Hesba Stretton (of whom I had heard) was none other than Sarah Smith; that there is sufficiently complete information about her in the Second Supplement of the *Dictionary of National Biography;* that her novel, *The Doctor's Dilemma*, was published at London in three volumes, 1872. Could any two authors possibly be more unlike than Hesba Stretton and Bernard Shaw? Yet he did not disdain to borrow from her. He must have borrowed his title, for to suppose the contrary would be to imagine that there was one thing in the world of which he had not heard. Of all the letters I have received about Sarah Smith, the following, from Justice John S. Dawson, Topeka, Kansas, is the most interesting:

"Dear Sir:

"Probably some of your readers will volunteer more information about Sarah Smith than I can give, but I'll tell you what I learned about her from her brother, a fine old English gentleman who emigrated to western Kansas and became my neighbour and revered friend until his death some ten years ago.

"Sarah Smith, born 'somewhere' in England, was one of five children,—Harriet, Eleanor, Sarah, Benjamin and Alice. She early showed some literary aptitude and was encouraged thereto by Charles Dickens. Owing to the plainness of her name, she adopted a *nom de plume*, Hesba Stretton, the word 'Hesba' being made from the first letters of the Christian names of her sisters, her brother, and herself,—H, E, S, B, A. I never heard of *The Doctor's Dilemma*, but many years ago I read some of her books, *Paul's Courtship*, *Cobwebs and Cables*, and I think some others which my memory now confuses with the writings of E. P. Roe. Their style and trend were much alike, as I recall.

"But the most interesting incident concerning Sarah Smith, or rather Hesba Stretton, for I was not aware that she had published any books under her own name, hangs around her little story, *Jessica's First Prayer*, which could be read in half an hour, just such a story as used to appear in Sunday-school leaflets a generation ago, and neither better nor worse than most of its kind.

"It chanced, however, about the time of its publication, that Sarah Smith was prominently active in relief work for famine sufferers in Russia. As an appreciation of her work, the Czar ordered *Jessica's First Prayer* translated into the Russian language, and a copy of it placed in every public library in the empire. The notoriety thereby occasioned caused a great demand for the little story, with the result that Sarah Smith made quite a bit of money by it. But that is only part of my tale. Some years later, Sarah Smith wrote an article for a London

paper, containing a scathing denunciation of the Siberian exile system. This so greatly enraged the Czar that he ordered the little book to be taken from the libraries of Russia and burned by the public hangman! This caused another world-wide demand for *Jessica's First Prayer*, and ere it subsided, Sarah Smith was on easy street for the rest of her life."

Professor Charles A. Beard, who, just before the catastrophe, returned from a year's stay in Japan, and upon arrival in his Connecticut home was immediately summoned back to assist in the proper restoration of the city of Tokio, which invitation was a high and well-merited compliment, writes me that he is now "amid the greatest scene of desolation in the history of human calamities. But the human spirit rises indomitable. More than 60,000 houses and shacks have been lifted from the ashes in one month and the whole city is a hive of industry." I think the name should be changed from Tokio to Phœnix.

Last year I wrote elsewhere the careless remark that after the fall of manna ceased in Old Testament times, it had never been heard of since. Which shows how little I know about it; for Robert T. Pound, of Labina, Montana, writes me that *The Scientific American* for July 1922, says: "Washington has received from Bagdad samples of Turkish manna. This manna falls

like dew during the autumn months, hardening into the form of grain. It is supposedly the same substance used by the children of Israel . . . It is a good substitute for sugar and honey, and sells for 45 cents a pound." Thus it is literally the bread of heaven, and the old Jewish historian knew almost as much as some of his critics.

Those who are still worried about the younger generation should attend to the following story, which I assure them is literally true. Not long ago an undergraduate told me that he personally did not like to drink, and did not drink except when home on vacations. "Even there," he said, "I do not really want to drink. But what shall I do? I can't bear to hurt father's feelings."

VII

THE declining days of the year 1923 were enlivened in Great Britain by two attacks, both coming from professional physicians, on the game of golf. The first consisted of the solemn pronouncement that for persons over fifty years of age golf was dangerous. According to the newspaper despatch, this statement caused "no end of trouble to middle-aged golfers with nervous wives and daughters." Well, I have a high respect for the opinions of physicians; only, where the authorities differ, their divergent opinions cannot be treated with equal reverence, not if the layman is outside of a sanatorium and has his own life to live. I agree with these conservative medicos in their warnings on golf, but only to this extent. I think myself that men over fifty should not devote all their time to golf; some of it should be given to tennis. There are two forms of exercise that I abominate. One is a slow, aimless walk, a saunter, either solitary or in company; it is so fearfully exhausting. If I go for a "stroll," gazing idly into shop-windows, or contemplating the fields, I return nearly fainting with fatigue. My back is one complete ache; my legs shake under me, and my feet are abominably sore. But if I go out and play five sets of tennis doubles, where both sides are equally matched in skill and in the burning lust

for victory, I return glowing with health and vigour, feeling as if I had renewed my youth. Or, if I hie me to the Country Club and play eighteen holes in a congenial foursome, where every man is eager to do his best, I feel at the end of the match as though I were walking on air. It is true that once in a while some man dies on a golf course; but what a "dear, beauteous death," as Henry Vaughan remarked. God's blue sky above, the green grass beneath, and friendly companions present at the last moment.

There is only one thing more exhausting than a saunter, either along city pavements or country roads; and that is to go sightseeing, especially when accompanied with a guide whose tongue is as tireless as his feet. I shall never forget my first long morning in Paris, when an unselfish but inhuman friend attempted to show me the "chief places of interest." I was only twenty-five years old, and in perfect condition; but after we had tramped the streets, and entered the various churches and museums, each one prefaced by a "*Here* we see the spot where," etc., I had a thousand little shoots of pain, dominated by one overwhelming, all-pervading sense of fatigue, as importunate as a toothache, only covering the whole anatomy. I told him along about lunch-time, the importance of which meal had apparently not occurred to him, that I had had enough; I cared no more for architecture, or paintings, or historic places; the *summum bonum*

to me just then was a restaurant, where there were chairs to sit on and food to eat. He paid no attention to this remark, but dragged me in front of another masterpiece. After looking at that with lack-lustre eyes, I suggested lunch. He said, "We will now enter this interesting building across the street. *Here* we have the place"—but he, being in front, entered it alone. So soon as he was safely inside, I ran with surprising agility toward a passing omnibus, climbed to the *impériale*, neither knowing nor caring whither I was going. Merely to remember that terrible day in Paris brings back the agony of total exhaustion. After that experience, I understood instantly why so many of my fellow-countrymen in Europe looked so unhappy; I knew the cause of that "tired feeling." Some eager friend, who "knew the ropes," had been showing them the sights; and they had reached the stage where they would rather see hell alone than be personally conducted through heaven.

I said there were two forms of exercise which I abominated. One I have described. Its only merit is that it is mainly in the open air. The other lacks even that blessing. I refer, of course, to gymnasium work and all systems of weights, pulleys, clubs, dumb-bells, and "building-up exercises." These are doubtless extremely beneficial to growing boys and girls, who will have fun enough outside to counteract the grind; they are essential in training for some specific contest or to overcome or nullify some

physical defect. When the gymnasium and other indoor exercises are taken under the direction of a physical trainer or medical man, much good may result; but the one prime requisite is lacking—*fun*. As men and women grow older they need not less, but more, recreation; they must have some fun. The only way to combine the element of physical exercise with the element of mental diversion is to play some exciting game in the open air. Children may *want* fun, but men and women need it. They need it as a fish needs water.

Every person over thirty years of age has something to worry about every week; and in addition to the worries abundantly supplied by life and nature, every person is able to think up enough imaginary worries to take up the spare time. It is therefore necessary if one is to live happily that one should have the mind diverted as well as the body actified (my own word). There is nothing like golf or tennis for this. They combine all the essentials of joy. One breathes the air of heaven; one has agreeable company; one is so intent on winning that all other thoughts vanish and the ordinary worries of the mind die like dust under a refreshing shower. Furthermore, one of the necessary elements of happiness is anticipation. If one has something pleasant to look forward to every day, one cannot remain unhappy. I believe that hard-working men and women who yet insist on finding time for outdoor games not only

enjoy their games but enjoy their work a hundredfold more than those whose lives are made up merely of work and rest. Fond as I am of sport, I should hate to have sport as a major occupation; I should not care to be a professional athlete or an amateur whose only occupation is sport; although both these classes are usually composed of attractive individuals. But the certainty that golf or tennis is to follow the day's or the morning's work adds enormously to my enjoyment of that work. For example: during the morning hours of hard labour, if I know that late in the afternoon I am to have tennis or golf, my mind, while not distracted from the serious toil on which I am engaged, is in a warm glow of delight, like that of a child on the day before Christmas. On that day of all days—by which I mean the day before—the child may really be thinking of something else, and yet the core of its being is bliss. It is like a well-heated house in winter; you don't think of the furnace, but you enjoy the heat. For this reason, I think it it important for men and women to take their golf engagements seriously. Never play one match of tennis or golf without arranging definitely for the next one. Allow nothing to interfere with that. Thus I am not accessible at three o'clock in the afternoon. There are unthinking people who will appoint committee meetings and personal interviews and business engagements at three o'clock in the afternoon. I had rather have them at three o'clock in the

morning. One interview, one committee meeting, one business engagement at three ruins the entire afternoon. I have no doubt that there are now thousands of men in their graves who would be alive and well had it not been for the detestable habit of three o'clock engagements. I am sometimes willing to be seen at two or at six, perhaps in winter at five; but never at three. Do not, I implore you, leave pleasure to chance; don't indulge in outdoor games when everything else is done. Everything else is never done. Make the date ahead. It ensures you the fun at the stipulated time, and it saves telephoning, which, I mean telephoning, is exactly my notion of physical exercise without pleasure. To get your telephone connexion, says *Figaro*, is not an achievement; it is a career.

It is now eleven o'clock in the morning. I am writing this article. I am absorbed in it, giving to it my entire attention. Whether bad or not, it is the best I can do. But at the back of my mind there is the radiant unconscious consciousness that at three o'clock this afternoon I am to have a rattling game of tennis. And as the sun is shining in an unclouded sky, the tennis is as certain as anything can be. As the psychologists would not say, my cerebrum is engaged on this essay; my cerebellum is filled with tennis. This is as near as I can get to expressing a combination of brain and stomach.

I am having an extremely good time writing this article; but my pleasure is distinctly en-

hanced by the knowledge of what is going to happen this afternoon.

I am certain that the reason for so many stodgy men and women, so many mechanical and monotonous minds, is that they do not arrange their lives so as to have some exciting games in the open air. They would enjoy both work and play, which would be an amazing change from their present condition. Now they have no play, and they do not enjoy their work.

Furthermore, I am a tremendous believer in the virtue of sweat. A game that brings out the sweat not only relieves the body of accumulated poison but cleanses the mind of much perilous stuff. Religious doubts, social problems, business worries, personal griefs and sorrows, cannot be solved or obliterated by sweat; but the sufferer can by sweat be put into a condition to triumph over them. Old Francis Quarles, the great Emblem poet of the seventeenth century, exclaimed with perhaps too much pungency for fastidious tastes,

> I see no virtues where I smell no sweat.

Just as there are persons who do not laugh enough, so there are persons—usually the same ones—who do not sweat enough. My readers are familiar with faces whose expression seldom changes; these people always look about the same. They have a horrible passivity. You cannot imagine them suddenly laughing or crying; such a demonstration would crack their fea-

tures. How strange it is that in a world like this there are so many human beings who regard it with expressionless eyes! If one of these worthies would sit down and review his existence for the last two weeks, he would discover that there were two things he had not done; he had not once laughed aloud and he had not once been plunged in sweat. Man may exist, but man cannot live without sweating and laughing.

Harking back to the beginning of this essay, it will not be remembered that I said the game of golf had been made the object of *two* professional medical attacks. The first came from those physicians who said that it was too violent an exercise for men of over fifty; I shall be fifty-nine before this paper is printed. The second was made in the London *World* by Doctor Harold Dearden, who warned brain-workers and tired business men to keep away from golf as from the plague. He is quoted as saying, "Of all games for tired brain-workers, I believe golf to be the worst." Now if he had said chess, I should not only have understood him; I should have agreed with him. I refuse to play chess. Burton, in his marvellous book, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, published three hundred years ago, said the last word on chess. I have not the book here, and I doubt if a copy can be found in this Florida town where I am writing; but I can remember the pith and current of his remarks. Chess he declared to be very bad for men of

sedentary lives, "all out as bad as study." It enrages the mind as well as tires it, being "very offensive to him that loseth the mate." He recommended it to such as go on long voyages or who are daily engaged in violent labour. Like nearly everything that lonely scholar wrote, his remarks on chess are of the innermost essence of wisdom. If I engaged passage on a sailing ship out of New York, first stop Honolulu, I should certainly take along the implements for this ancient game. I also cordially recommend chess to prize-fighters, lumber-jacks, carpenters, sculptors, dentists, and postmen. But never to those whose work is mainly done in a chair.

I suppose that Doctor Dearden's disapproval of golf for sedentary people is based on its excitement, on the necessity of mental concentration on every stroke, and on the rage that results from missed putts. But while there are those whose temperament unfits them for any competitive contest, the necessity of concentration in golf is its greatest asset. All other worries vanish. What the human mind needs is not rest; what it needs is change of work. Most people rest their minds too much; and it is a significant and interesting fact—which I might easily make the subject of a whole article—that the least active minds seem to require the most rest. The motion-picture houses and the musical-comedy theatres are filled with people who are resting their minds, when what these minds need is a tonic. The excitement of golf is its

greatest blessing to a tired business man or a nervous brain-worker. It is like a change of air.

I shall never be able to decide whether explosions of wrath or self-control are better for the golf-player. There can be no doubt that control is better for his game and more agreeable for his partner; and the lack of it is better for his opponent. The moment a player begins to rave and curse and roar about his bad luck, that moment his antagonist begins to improve. But how about the condition of the player's physical and mental system? I know men who curse outrageously and yet the game seems to do them good. I remember an excellent man who never lost his temper while playing, and never used heated language. I saw him repeatedly in a foursome, where one of the men, putting first and putting badly, let out a stream of curses, for, as the undergraduate said, "I find that in golf sailors have nothing on college professors in fluency of speech"; whenever this happened, my friend would say quietly, "Now it is my turn to putt; suppose you say nothing until I have finished. Then you may roar all you like." And his shot was followed by no comment. You could not tell from his face or his voice what had happened. I admired his self-control immensely, and respected the sublimity of his character; but he afterward became incurably insane. So that now I wonder; I wonder if perhaps he had released his disappointment in a torrent of curses? —but with his iron self-control he kept all the

poison in his system, and eventually it was too much for him.

There are those whose bad playing and resulting disappointment overweigh the pleasure of the game. As one man put it, "you come out at three o'clock with a headache, you are tired and nervous; then you play eighteen holes in the glorious open air, and go home feeling a blank sight worse than when you came out." I advise all such men to go right on playing. The advice is superfluous. They cannot let it alone.

Physicians differ curiously here. One doctor will tell you that violent explosions of rage and noisy imprecations cause changes in the tissue that will result in cancer or in insanity; in other words, you must control yourself if you wish to remain in bodily health. Other physicians say that these rages are extremely beneficial; they are like a magnificent internal massage. There are many scientific men who are studying daily the effect of anger on the body; I am glad I am not one of the animals on which they are experimenting.

Nearly all men are merely grown-up children when it comes to games. I suppose the truly rational man would not care whether he won or lost, so long as he had the exercise, the open air, and good company. But there is no rational man. How eager we are to win, how we hate to be beaten! One day in 1913, as I was dressing in the locker-room after a game of golf, in came the most good-natured man in the world, the

Honourable William Howard Taft. He never uses profane language; but on this occasion he hurled his bag of clubs to the floor and emitted a snort of rage. "What's the matter?" I enquired; "did you get licked?" "Yes," said he, "and I played a rotten game." "Why," I said innocently, "you seem to feel worse about losing to-day's golf game than you did at losing the Presidential election." "Well, I do *now*," he replied emphatically. Which was true, and it would be true of most men. The sting of defeat does not last very long; but while it lasts it is bitter. For this reason, a man who has just won a hole in golf should never call his opponent's attention to the beauty of the natural scenery; at that moment he is in no proper attitude to appreciate such things. Perfectly respectable men, after making a poor shot in golf, will leap up and down in a frenzy of rage, use words that would astound some of their acquaintances, and smash an expensive club. At one course where there was a water-hole, a good citizen drove his ball into the lake; he teed up another and drove that also into the lake. Then he threw each one of his clubs into the lake, finally the bag, and then went home. Now did that explosion improve or injure his general health? A man told me that on one golf course he saw a bank president, an admirable person and one whose judgment in business was universally respected—he saw him foozle a shot with his brassie. Then the bank president broke the

implement and, holding the mutilated remainder, he *bit* it with insane violence.

Why do we care so much? The professionals set us an example here that none of us duffers can follow. Although success and failure in the game mean everything to them, for it is their means of livelihood, they almost never give way to passion. In the first place, they know that passion spoils their accuracy; and in the second place, men never show as much outward irritation over important as over unimportant things. Had this bank president who bit his club been told of the sudden failure of his bank, he would not have bitten anything.

The late Professor William Dwight Whitney, who was the foremost Sanskrit scholar in the world, and who was a model of courtesy and dignity, was forbidden by his physician to play any game whatever, croquet, cards, checkers, or anything else; because he was so downcast by defeat that the doctor was sure he was injuring his health. Such a situation gives one plenty of material for prolonged reflexion. What is there in mere victory or defeat that excites us so? And why is the whole Anglo-Saxon world crazy about competitive sport?

Many years ago Wilkie Collins wrote a long novel against athletics, called *Man and Wife.* He did everything he could to attack "the athletic craze" in the English universities; in his account of a four-mile running race between two men, he said with utter contempt that thousands

of spectators were gathered to see which of two men—neither of whom was of any importance—could run faster than the other. His book, though well written and filled with unanswerable arguments, produced no impression. Look at the interest in university athletics fifty years after his fulminations! It all gets down to the point made by Arthur T. Hadley—have you or have you not sporting blood? If you have not, the general excitement over sport and one's own chagrin at defeat are both alike ridiculous and irrational. But if you have sporting blood, you can no more reason yourself into an attitude of indifference to athletics or into indifference to defeat than you can reason yourself into another kind of animal. For sporting blood is an animal instinct, like jealousy; it is hard to control it by reason.

Knowing my love of literature, the fine arts, and everything that makes for culture and the life of the mind, a lady asked me an extremely awkward question. "You have been teaching at Yale for many years. You have devoted your life to developing the minds of your pupils. Now tell me honestly: which would you rather see, one of your pupils make a brilliant recitation in the classroom or make a touch-down against Harvard?" The love of truth that I try to inculcate in my students forced me not to flinch. I replied: "Well, I am deeply gratified when one of my students makes a brilliant recitation, only I do not smash my hat."

To those who are interested in golf and the human nature revealed by the game, let me heartily recommend Sandy Herd's autobiography, called *My Golfing Life*, with a preface by Field-Marshal Earl Haig. This is not a manual for the beginner or for the expert; it is not a manual at all. Sound elementary advice is given in the last chapters; but the book follows its title. It is the story of Sandy Herd's rise from caddie to champion. It is filled with entertaining anecdotes, giving intimate portraits of Harry Vardon, J. H. Taylor, and other stars; he describes his two journeys to America, with many observations on our national characteristics. But it is the history of his own life that captivates the reader—his ambition to excel even when he was a child. His personality is peculiarly attractive. One feels acquainted with him. As a professional teacher of other things, I can estimate his own skill as a teacher, and I can see why he has been so successful. Best of all is the fact that although he makes his living by golf, there is no amateur in the world who loves it more. It is fine to see such enthusiasm. It seems clear from this book that Sandy Herd has never played a match mechanically or given a lesson without giving himself with it. His interest in golf is infectious; no player can read Herd's account of close contests without feeling a thrill. And how comforting to the mediocre golfer to hear of the short putts missed by professionals!

There is a whole philosophy of life in a missed short putt, and it makes for pessimism. One does not need to know what a putt is to understand what I mean. For what I mean is this. It is strange that men and women should be so constituted that they can do things easily when the doing of them is of no importance; whilst the moment it becomes essential to do that very thing the doing of it becomes a thousandfold harder. To knock a golf-ball into a hole two feet away is so easy that the ordinary man or woman, while practising alone, could probably do it two hundred times successively; but when a championship depends upon sinking a two-foot putt, there is not a man or woman in the world who is not in danger of missing it. There seems to be a curse on humanity, which lessens ability when it is most needed. Why should the intense desire to do a thing reduce a man's ability to do it? In a perfect world, it would be just the other way around; the more important the crisis, the greater would be the performer's skill. But among the children of men, a consuming eagerness to accomplish something—no matter what it may be—usually makes its accomplishment far more difficult. This is why *Casey at the Bat* is at once one of the most pessimistic poems in the language and one of the truest to human nature. Why is it easy to walk on a plank at an elevation of two feet and difficult at higher elevations? Why do the most skilful surgeons refuse to operate on members of their own fam-

ily? Why do the greatest orators only seldom rise to an occasion? Why is it that in the complete works of Wordsworth, only a fourth part is good? Why is it that Shakespeare, who had a command of language so marvellous that he seemed to be able to find the right word without effort—why is it that only about seven of his plays are generally read and about thirty neglected? Why is it that the greatest humorists cannot be funny when they most strenuously wish to be? Why did Richter say that every great poet goes to his grave with his best poems unwritten? Why are so few happy retorts made in conversation? Why does the after-dinner speaker always make his most brilliant speech on the way home from the banquet?

It seems that, after all, the happiest people may be those who have no ambition; who are merely content to live in obscurity, taking only what the day provides, satisfied with simple things. Many hard words have been said against ambition, by Shakespeare, Milton, and others; the attack on ambition is based on the loss of happiness resulting from the disparity between dream and reality. For in this world the ambitious man must struggle not only against the ordinary obstacles in the way of success; he must struggle against the scheme of things, like a swimmer against the current.

Success is the sweeter on those rare occasions when it comes, because it is a victory over the conditions of life. We do well to honour those

who reach the top. There are only a very few "consistent performers" in any line of intellectual, artistic, or athletic effort; only a very few who do their best when their best is most essential. Look back over the history of the world, and think, out of all the millions of speeches that have been delivered, how few survive and how small a proportion each one of those bears to its speaker's total. We are right therefore in paying tribute to genius; and the old writer in the *Apocrypha* said a fine thing finely when he said, "Let us now praise famous men."

I am glad that William Butler Yeats received the Nobel prize. He has excelled in poetry, drama, and criticism. He is not only one of the foremost of living poets, he is unquestionably the greatest lyrical poet Ireland has ever produced. So long as the Nobel prize is to be given only to those who have "arrived," and a glance over the list of the twenty-three recipients demonstrates that such has been the policy, Mr. Yeats richly deserves it. Gerald Stanley Lee has suggested that the prize should be given to young writers of promise, in order that the attention of the world might be drawn to them and that they might be encouraged. As it is now, the Nobel prize is merely a ratification of popular opinion. This is the safer method of award.

In a previous chapter, I wrote of my pleasure

in reading Oscar Browning's autobiography. One of my correspondents sends me the following tribute to Mr. Browning's girth, written by a Cambridge undergraduate:

> O. B., oh be obedient
> To Nature's stern decrees,
> For though you be but one O. B.,
> You may be too obese!

Librarians have developed faster than booksellers. Years ago, in the Society Library on University Place, New York, there was an assistant librarian who was puzzled by the frequent enquiries for a book called Shakespeare. He could not find out who wrote this book, so he finally asked a lady member—who seems analogous to the lady from Philadelphia and the Peterkin family: "Who wrote Shakespeare?" A correspondent informs me that this is a true incident. But I think it is fortunate that the lady was not a Baconian. This happened years ago; but only the other day, so a clergyman writes me, he enquired in a book-shop for Addison's Essays, and the clerk said, "You mean Thomas Edison?" "No," said the man of God, "Joseph Addison, Addison and Steele, you know," and the clerk, catching the name of Addison's collaborator, and thinking it to be a common noun, directed the purchaser to the technical books. He bought a volume of Ruskin and left. I think he made a double error. He should have bought nothing in such a shop; and

he should not have gone away without giving the clerk some elementary instruction in his job.

I am writing in Miami, in a glorious winter climate. This is not an advertisement, for I am paying my hotel bill. Other "winter resorts" can be cold; I shall return to this subject in a later essay. But Miami has eternal summer, and the visitor can be certain of finding it here. I came hither for the climate, but there are many distinguished people who are brought here for the same reason that brings ordinary pilgrims like me. At the next table to mine in the dining-room sits George Ade, national humorist, playwright, and philosopher; his *Fables in Slang* are pungent criticisms of human nature. I am glad that he has at last arranged to have his dramatic works published. E. W. Howe, the exponent of common sense and shrewd sincerity, has lived here for many winters. Briggs, by all odds the foremost cartoonist in America, is here.

Yesterday afternoon, 29 December, some of us went to a large lawn-party and musical recital at the beautiful home of William Jennings Bryan. The lawn slopes down to the sea; some hundred people, in light summer clothing, sat in chairs placed on the grass and listened to the piano played in the open air by a young gentleman of nineteen, Schuyler Aldrich, whom my friend Aldrich of the New York *Times* would be glad to claim as a relation. The boy played Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Moszkowski, Debussy, and

other composers, and played so exquisitely that perhaps some day we shall all be talking about him. The surroundings were harmonious; the iridescent sea of Florida, the blue sky, the balmy air, and the setting sun made up a magnificent accompaniment. Mr. Bryan gracefully introduced the musician and added to the pleasure of the company. I will say nothing of his views on politics and theology. But I will say two things. He is unquestionably the foremost of living American orators, and in the political history of America there have been only three men with so large a personal following—they are Henry Clay, James G. Blaine, and Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Bryan has survived three defeats for the Presidency, and every form of attack, ranging from argument to ridicule. There is probably no man in the United States who has half so many personal followers as he. The reason for this leads one into various interesting speculations; but I think it comes down in the end to geniality and kindness of heart, backed by the mysterious genius of Personality. There are millions who would not vote for Mr. Bryan, but there are not many who hate him.

There is one thing he ought to do, and he ought to begin doing it now. He ought to write his autobiography. If he would tell in simple, natural language the story of his life, leaving out propaganda on politics and theology, he would I think write a book that would live forever. He would have to eschew the oratorical style

and, what would be more difficult, the moralising manner. If he would simply tell the world his life-story from boyhood to the present day, tell of various incidents in his campaigns, of the persons he has known in Europe and in America, from Tolstoi to the most humble of his supporters, it would be a permanent record of a phase in American political and social life.

VIII

When Frank Swinnerton was lecturing in New Haven last autumn, he had a good deal to say about Compton Mackenzie. Mr. Swinnerton's lecture pleased me, for it was the kind of discourse I find most profitable. Instead of reading a critical essay on modern fiction, he had the courage to talk intimately about the personal peculiarities of his friends Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, and Compton Mackenzie, thus giving his audience information that only he could give and which, for obvious reasons, could not be found on any printed page. Mr. Mackenzie, who, in addition to being an original and brilliant novelist, is an authority on chorus girls and the Catholic movement in the Church of England, has lately conceived such a passion for the music of the needle that he has founded a monthly magazine, called *The Gramophone.* Not long after Mr. Swinnerton's lecture, I received by the telepathic route a message from a stranger to me, Mr. Frederic H. Powell, of Washington. He enclosed a copy of *The Gramophone* for December, with an interesting letter, from which I quote:

"If you are not, yourself, interested in canned music I am sure you know some one who is, and who in turn might pass the discovery along,

which I have made, *i. e.*, the superior, or at least more modern, quality of music recorded in England. I might add that the Victor, Columbia, and Æolian companies will fill orders from their English catalogues. The 14 double disc recording of 'Die Meistersinger,' making it practically complete, is a tribute either to the musical appreciation or the silent heroism of the English according to one's point of view."

I myself became a convert to the gramophone by an accident. I managed to acquire a severe case of pinkeye, so severe that the physician would not let me go out in the cold air, or read, or smoke. I therefore bought a machine, and spent hours listening to Beethoven, Wagner, and other composers interpreted by symphony orchestras, as well as to opera excerpts and songs sung by Caruso, Chaliapin, and other artists. There must be an immense number of people who are forced to stay indoors for more or less protracted periods. If they cannot play any musical instrument, the gramophone is a pastime and an education—and education and happiness mean about the same thing.

There is an enormous difference of opinion about the value of mechanical music. It is never so good as the individual performer. I had always rather hear a great singer or a great pianist than hear their whirling records. But when man's presence is impossible, the disc is a good substitute; though piano records are the least satisfactory. The late Professor Horatio

Parker, whose standards in music, as in everything else, were both lofty and uncompromising, had an absolute contempt for all substitutions. A colleague on the faculty once had the temerity to ask Parker's advice in buying a player-piano; and Parker replied in withering tones; "Why don't you consult a mechanic?"

Gramophones, like motion-pictures, books, sport, Paris, and other objects, can be a means of elevation or the contrary. The majority of motion-pictures are probably vulgar, silly, and debasing; and the motion-picture habit is more destructive to the mind than a drug; yet there are some pictures which no one ought to miss. The purpose of Mr. Mackenzie's magazine is to emphasise the educational, joy-giving possibilities of the best records. He takes pains to point out that the periodical has been subsidised by no one except himself; that it is not an organ of any manufacturer; that the editorial staff has not the slightest relation to the advertisement staff. "We are not a paper for the Trade; we are a paper for the Public; and I have myself been a servant of the public too long not to be aware by now of my responsibilities."

He and his contributors are therefore free to recommend any records that they have tried and found satisfactory; and in every number there are admirable suggestions. The fact that the whole opera of *Die Meistersinger* is now available is of first-rate importance. I am certainly going to buy it. There is a good deal about music as

well as about machines in this magazine. Mr. Mackenzie says that Percy Scholes's new book, *The Listener's History of Music* (which I have just ordered), "will lend a new interest to many of your records, and teach you, as it has taught me, more about music than any book I have read for some time."

One of the most interesting articles is contributed by F. Foster Williams, and is called *Records and Music in Germany*. Mr. Williams is an Englishman who fought in the war, and this article describes his recent peaceful invasion of Germany, whither he went in search of new records; he returned with a huge number, and the way he eluded the Belgian customs is amusing. He speaks in the highest terms of two great German singers, now members of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, Paul Bender and Michel Bohnen, and recommends some of their records.

It is interesting to observe that two English novelists, Compton Mackenzie and Archibald Marshall, have collaborated on a book, *Gramophone Nights*. which contains thirty-one programmes, selected and arranged "one for each night of the month, with introductions, explanations, and descriptions."

Mr. Bok's peace prize has been awarded, and there is, as there was bound to be, much disappointment; for there were many who seem to have expected some ready and easy solution of the greatest problem in the world. Neverthe-

less, the offering of the prize was itself a valuable contribution to the cause, for which all lovers of civilisation should be grateful. Only good can come from constant discussion; for the more war is discussed, the more absurd it will appear. The campaign of education will be greatly assisted by a huge referendum; and if an enormous majority should declare themselves to be in favour of some practical plan of peace, the pressure on Congressional and Presidential opinion ought to be productive. The real difficulty is of course in the human heart; until that time comes when the majority of people will actually be willing to make one one-hundredth of the sacrifices for peace that they joyfully make for war, all peace plans will have a flavour of impracticability. Even now, it is unfortunately true that the man who invents some new destructive weapon seems to the average citizen more *practical* than the man who proposes some scheme for world-peace.

There is much talk of outlawing war; of declaring war to be a crime and those who promote it to be criminals. But alas! the moment war breaks out, no matter for what reason—and there was no reason for the World War—those who then oppose it seem to the vast majority of their fellow-citizens to be worse criminals than robbers and murderers. Fighting is a natural instinct, which, like all natural instincts, must be controlled by reason, morality, and religion. When nations adopt the code that now prevails

among enlightened individuals, war will cease. In my judgment, the only way to stop war is to believe in Christianity. The Founder of Christianity has given us all the knowledge that is necessary on this as on every other moral problem; he was the wisest and most practical teacher that the world has ever known.

A valuable book has recently been written by Philip Kerr and Lionel Curtis, called *The Prevention of War*. A long review of it in the Literary Supplement of the London *Times* ends with this astounding paragraph:

"But if the other nations will not willingly accept the Anglo-Saxon gospel, then indeed we have left for us as the sole resource the last tremendous conception—one which we feel convinced is far from the conscious thought of our authors—that the time will come when the English-speaking race, tired and wearied of the follies of the rest of the world, will join together to impose their will upon it and by sheer force create a unity which will give to them the opportunity of teaching the lessons of freedom."

For sheer national conceit, for an exhibition of the religion of nationalism which has done more to cause modern wars than any other impulse, for self-righteous Pharisaical complacency, I do not know anything that can surpass this pronouncement. Are we then spotless, and all the rest of the world living in sin? Is war a monopoly of Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians? How

about the Mexican War, which, in the opinion of General Grant, brought down upon our country the tragedy of the Civil War? How about the Boer War, which was assuredly one of the causes of the World War? I believe with all my heart in the union of English-speaking people, but we should first repent of our sins before presuming to instruct others.

It is just such paragraphs as I have quoted that inflame the resentment of other nations. I did not know whether to laugh or to swear when I read in Lloyd George's recent volume that standing armies must everywhere be abolished, because they are a menace, an incentive to war; but that navies should not be abolished, because they are purely defensive.[1]

I do not agree with the common saying that the next war will destroy the world; this old world has lived through so many catastrophes that I think it will go on existing after the next big war. The Thirty Years' War set Germany back two centuries; but she became rather formidable again by the year 1914. Still, it will be such a disaster that what we call civilisation will not deserve to survive, whether it does or not. If the black or yellow or brown race secures the control of the world, it will be because the white race has demonstrated its incapacity. It is internal strife, and not the foreign foe, that conquers any country or any organisation. When William was making his plans to invade England, Harold was engaged in a fight to a finish with

his own brother. In a world full of sin, scepticism, and downright unbelief, we find the Christian Church in the twentieth century engaged in an incredibly silly civil war between parties that call themselves Modernists and Fundamentalists.

Although the Bok prize plan has many merits, and was selected by a competent jury as the best out of a vast number, and was won by a man who commands universal respect, Charles H. Levermore, it has been greeted by some "practical" men with ridicule. It is well, therefore, to remember that even the silliest plan to promote peace is not nearly so silly as war. A competition among idiots in a lunatic asylum could not produce a scheme more absurd than the one which has been generally adopted by statesmen.

As a candidate for the Ignoble Prize, I suggest all pictures of Still Life. You know what I mean, for it is, for some unknown reason, a common mural decoration, especially in dining-rooms. There is a table, usually covered with a checked table-cloth. On this stands a large basket of fruit: oranges, peaches, bananas, apples, and grapes. This basket is usually overset; so that out of it come tumbling apples, peaches, oranges, bananas, and grapes. This is thought to be Art; it is in reality so stupid and tiresome that how people can endure looking at it three times a day and every day in the year is an unanswerable question. There is only one thing

worse in a dining-room than pictures of fruit, and that is pictures of huge dead fish, with their horrible mouths agape. *De gustibus non disputandum.* Some people love to have large fish served on the platter with the head conspicuously there; I have seen game-birds and chickens brought on in that fashion, which makes the taste of Salome more intelligible.

The Ignoble Prize continues to draw many candidates. I have just received a letter from Mr. Gordon Paul Grainger, a Harvard graduate, who suggests Rodin's Thinker, "because, like Rodin, he is a faker. Only a Rodin would ask you to believe that such an individual could think. Rachmaninoff's Prelude, because in the scale of gloom it represents absolute zero. It should be adopted as the official anthem of the Despair School now so rampant." I can easily understand these suggestions, but I was bowled over by the following sentence in the same letter: "*The Canterbury Tales*, because there is not a single poetic epithet or simile in the entire poem." And this proposal comes from Harvard—the home of Child and Kittredge! My own belief accords with that of Walter Savage Landor, who said that Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Browning were the greatest of the English poets as interpreters of human nature.

The death of Basil Gildersleeve removes one of the best classical scholars. His appointment at the new university of Johns Hopkins was an

illustration of the foresight, insight, and judgment of Daniel Coit Gilman. Gildersleeve had the three qualities that, taken together, make the ideal college professor. He was a profound scholar; he was an inspiring teacher; he was a striking personality. He was a poet and a humorist; his influence was as wide as the world. It has always seemed strange to me that any man could devote his life to the study of Homer, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Plato and yet be dull. There are, however, many melancholy examples. How do they, living in daily contact with such poetry, drama, wisdom, humour, philosophy, with such immortal representatives of all that is most human in humanity, contrive to be themselves either inhuman or dehumanised? Of the enormous number of undergraduates exposed to scholarship, only a small proportion catch it; but this fact is not nearly so astonishing as the fact that teachers of classical literature, who are exposed every day to the finest illustrations of men and women, should themselves remain as juiceless as a Saratoga potato.

I suppose the answer is to be found in the tragic capacity of nearly all persons to live two lives that never harmonise—the ideal and the ordinary. Many a clergyman who is really inspired in the pulpit and when reading the Bible in his study, shows in daily life petty vices of meanness and jealousy and conceit; how astonishing that one who lives in the spirit should be

so picayune! Many a business man who is kind, considerate, even jovial outside of business hours, wears a hard mask and is merciless when dealing with any "business proposition." I shall never forget an occasion when I entered the office of a bank president who was a friend of mine, and we talked for some minutes in the easiest, most agreeable manner. Then, although I wanted no favours, I merely happened to make some allusion to business. Instantly his face hardened, his lips came tightly together, and there was a gleam in his eye like a sword. He was exactly like a duellist suddenly challenged. I said to myself, "Thank God, I am not in the power of this man!" There were two men before me, the unofficial good fellow and the official man in armour. So, I suppose, there have been many professors of Greek, who, alone with their authors, are full of inspiration and elevated by beauty; while in the routine of the classroom, and in their daily dealings with men and women, betray no sign of possessing a human heart. I hate a professional manner. I see no reason why so many individuals should put on an expression as a soldier dons a uniform. I do not see why persons should not be natural at all times and under all circumstances.

There must be many professional teachers and preachers who would love to be good fellows, would give everything in the world to be natural, only they don't know how.

However this may be, Gildersleeve was always

and everywhere as human as Euripides. The most exacting scholarship never quenched his humour and his sympathy. One of the chief inspirations in the life of Walter H. Page was this classical teacher; and Page was only one out of so many!

I hope that somebody at Gildersleeve's obsequies read Browning's *Grammarian's Funeral.*

The death of Maurice Francis Egan, poet, critic, diplomatist, American gentleman, was a distinct loss to our age. He was a man of the world and a man of God. Religion in him illumined his whole life; if, as Samuel Butler the novelist said, "the chief duty of a Christian is to be happy," Egan did his duty thoroughly. I am glad that he published in his old age his *Confessions of a Booklover*, and no one enjoyed more than he the typographical error of his lecture announcement in Virginia, which made the book read, *Confessions of a Bootlegger.* He loved books and he loved people. He was a perfect dinner companion. He was American Minister to Denmark when the University of Christiania celebrated its centenary, in 1911; and I am quite sure that many delegates remember how much he did to make his colleagues enjoy that memorable week. That was the most charming academic festivity I ever fared forth to see—what fun we had! Minister Egan, Provost Smith of Pennsylvania, Dean Carpenter of Columbia, and I were in the hotel immortalised by Ibsen—I

shall not forget Egan's comic despair at the sight of his bill, which, because of the dignity of his office, was longer than his arm. There too I met those splendid British scholars, W. P. Ker and C. H. Herford, both of whom filled me with envy by their knowledge of Norwegian. I grew even more yellow when Ker was called upon to speak, and addressed the polyglot assembly in "marble's language, Latin, pure, discreet." That was also the only occasion when I shook hands with a king and queen, and I bethought me of the Scriptural phrase, so happily quoted by Franklin: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings."

Among the new books, there is one in French which should not be overlooked or unbought by any one interested in modern drama. This is *Henry Becque, sa Vie et son Théâtre*, by Eric Dawson, Chancellor of the University of Mississippi. It is a volume of about 250 pages, with a valuable bibliography, and contains the best account of the life and career of the founder of the modern school of French realism. *Les Corbeaux* is one of the most powerful and one of the most germinal plays in the French language. It leaves an indelible impression, and unlike most plays of its time (1882) seems to-day not old-fashioned or obsolete. Its author had a bitter and tragic life, and, although he "fished the murex up," he was forced to dine on porridge, whereas the modern Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes, and

Nokes have terrapin and claret. Had the later French dramatists followed Becque in sincerity and truth, they might to-day command the intellectual respect of the world. As it is, they are clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day, while French drama is bankrupt. Professor Dawson has written an admirable book, one that ought to increase the number of Becque's readers. Henry Becque was strangely neglected by the public. I remember when I was in Paris in 1903, Antoine making a public protest. He said that Becque's grave had fallen into decay with the body it contained. His protest accomplished something; for, a few years later, a monument was erected to Becque in the city of Paris; his tomb was restored; and now his fame grows brighter every year. Becque found the persons in his plays more real than the people on the street, and he made them so. He lived with them. Just as Barrie, while writing his dialogue, grimaces and attitudinises as his speakers are supposed to do, so Becque wrote his plays in front of a mirror, where he tried out every gesture. I do not know why such a ridiculous collocation of words should occur to me, but I shall never get rid of them unless I write them down, so here they are. Remembering that La Fontaine wrote fables and that Becque wrote *Les Corbeaux,* I cannot get this absurdity out of my head:

> Maître Corbeau, sur un arbre perché,
> Tenait en son Becque un fromage.

One day I made a pilgrimage to Château-Thierry purely to do homage to La Fontaine, little knowing what the future held in store for that town.

The latest travesty on the Bible is described in the *Reformed Church Messenger*. It is a book by a woman of good intentions, called *Bible Stories in Rhyme*. The reviewer quotes Ted Robinson, the accomplished columnist of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, who adds the volume to the Worldsworst literature:

"Why can't bunglers leave the Bible alone? And why must innocent children be treated as idiots?

This, of course, is strong language; but if you doubt that there is provocation for it, take a look at this stanza:

Lot's wife was changed to a pillar of salt;
She disobeyed God, so it was her own fault.
She turned back, her old wicked city to view
While fleeing from Sodom, how sad, but how true.

Or this:

Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego,
Are three funny names, but this I know—
Of three braver boys you never heard tell;
When thrown into a furnace they didn't even yell."

Among the scores of autobiographies recently published, I have obtained much delight out of

Garrulities of an Octogenarian Editor, by the famous publisher, Henry Holt. Although he never forgave the faculty of Yale for their bad teaching, or the students because they did not elect him to a Senior Society—curious how that latter disappointment rankles in the minds of so many men—he has done one loyal and valuable service to Yale of which I find no mention here in his book, though it deserves recognition. During his long career, he has given to the Yale University Library a copy of every book he has published, a gift now amounting to thousands of dollars. Let me recommend his example to all other publishers who are college graduates. Let every publisher give to the library of his college one copy of every book that bears his name. Mr. Holt's book suffers by the repetition of facts and conversations, owing to his method of making his chapters verbatim reprints of his magazine articles; he should have gone over the entire copy before final publication and cut out the dittos. But, notwithstanding these and other defects, it is a splendid record of a splendid life. The author is so lovable, so warm-hearted, and possesses such a genius for friendship, that his account of the men he has known would restore even a cynic's faith in human nature.

It is interesting to observe all through Mr. Holt's books his continual onslaughts on Christian dogma, which he thinks incredible, while believing with all his might that the Society for

Psychical Research has proved the doctrine of human immortality! I have seldom known any one who rejected religious creeds who did not swallow something which to the religious mind is either shaky or incredible. Such tricks are played with reason. We cannot live without faith. Those who have no Christian faith will often believe in spirit séances, and those who believe neither in religion nor in mediums will have supreme faith in themselves, which is perhaps the funniest thing in the world.

Yet, after all, Mr. Holt is a good Christian, though he does not know it; for he believes that love is the greatest of all forces, which is the fundamental Christian doctrine. That, as Browning says, is the one fact best worth knowing, the only fact that makes us truly wise. And so far as I can see, Mr. Holt lives up to his creed. Any one who believes that and follows it is a genuine Fundamentalist.

Speaking of religion, there is a small but important book recently published called *The Comfort of the Catholic Faith*, by the Reverend Doctor Frank M. Clendennin. This is not Catholic propaganda, but a broad-minded, spiritual book. I heartily recommend it. I have also been interested in reading a novel by a Catholic priest, Father Barrett, of Hartford, called *The Winter of Discontent*. It is a story written to oppose the increasing fashion of easy divorces, but, although the moral and religious bias of the author

is clear, he tells an interesting tale, and his characters are living people. I shall await his next book with high expectation.

For those who like a rattling story of adventure with an ingenious plot, let me recommend *Cat O' Mountain*, by Arthur Friel. I had never heard of such natural scenery in the State of New York, but the author makes it real. Every chapter has a thrill.

I have received, as was to be expected, innumerable letters about cats and dogs. Many of these came from cat-lovers, commending me for my cat eulogy in *Scribner's Magazine*. Others were from dog-lovers, who felt that I had not treated the canicular question with due justice. In opposition to my statement that the dog will not hunt alone, two correspondents wrote that they had dogs which went off hunting woodchucks. Yes, but they went in pairs, not alone. One of the worst things that can be said about dogs is that they are like small boys—they draw each other into evil. It is a commonplace in a sheep country that if you own two dogs you must either keep them in sight or keep one tied up. No man could possibly admire my splendid Irish setters more than I; but any of these noble dogs, absolutely trustworthy alone, will, if left unwatched near another dog, steal away with his colleague by some secret signal and kill sheep. It was a terrible sight to me to behold a lamb, with its throat torn to pieces by my dog, who,

when in my company, seemed to possess all the virtues. But he sneaked off with another dog, and lacerated and killed a number of lambs and sheep. I paid the indignant farmer, and did not kill the dog, for I regard an Irish setter as more valuable than a sheep. He may not be so commercially valuable, for he is not so good to eat; but he has a more valuable personality. It may be that dogs have saved many human lives; but it is certain that they have killed more human beings than they have saved. They are by nature destructive of both inanimate and animate objects. One woman wrote me, giving an instance where a cat had tormented a little puppy; but for one instance of this, think of the number of beautiful cats that have been wounded and slain by dogs. Yet, in a fair fight, the cat will often win. Mr. John S. Coburn, the admirable New Haven apothecary, used to have a long yellow cat that was a match for any dog in the world. One day, when the cat was apparently asleep in a chair, a student came into the shop with a bull terrier. He warned Mr. Coburn to look out for his cat; but he was told to look out for his dog. The terrier made a sudden rush at the apparently sleeping cat; when, just as he was about to bite, a yellow paw, moving swifter than the arm of Sullivan in his best days, caught the dog on the side of his face, and, the door being open, the terrier ran a mile at his best speed. Despite many battles, this cat lived to be twenty years old.

At this moment I receive a letter from a dog-owner, who informs me that she knows of a dog who will hunt rabbits *alone*. So that's that.

Mr. Karl O. Bonnier, the leading publisher of Sweden, resembles other intelligent men in being a reader of *Scribner's Magazine;* he has just sent me a book of 250 pages, called *En Katt*, by Henning Berger. I shall have to learn Swedish in order to read this. But every one should buy it for the sake of the remarkable cat-pictures, of which there are forty. No knowledge of Swedish is necessary to enjoy these illustrations or to discover that the cat is highly appreciated in the Venice of the North. As Mr. Bonnier has a branch house in New York, this brilliant book may easily be obtained by Americans. Mr. Bonnier, who was an intimate friend of Strindberg, and who publishes a beautiful edition of that writer in nearly a hundred volumes, is about to print all his hitherto unpublished letters. They will certainly make interesting reading.

To return to dogs and cats. As Keats said of Greek mythology, I hope to touch the subject once more before bidding it farewell. Let me merely say now, in answer to scores of letters defending the dog, that my tribute to cats did not mean that I had ceased to love the only worshipper of man. Notwithstanding his grave faults, the dog is irresistibly lovable. Even the worst dog is better than the worst man; in this respect resembling the old Calvinists, who were

in many respects superior to the God they adored.

My present Irish setter, Rufus H. Phelps, is, so far as I know, entirely free from blood-guiltiness. He is a beautiful and wholly admirable dog. Furthermore, he is the most literary dog I have ever known. He has been stroked by W. B. Yeats, patted by Hugh Walpole, petted by G. K. Chesterton, caressed by Joseph Conrad, and kissed by John Galsworthy.

IX

The letters from W. H. Hudson to Edward Garnett, 1901–1922, have just been published. They make interesting reading, because they are the expression of an interesting mind. Every one who knew Hudson well seems to have been impressed by the keenness of his observation and the charm of his personality. Such qualities are sufficiently obvious in this book, all the more so because not one of the letters was intended for publication; they were written hastily and impulsively. He wrote on many subjects—natural history, war, new novels, free verse, Edith Wharton, Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, D. H. Lawrence, Henry James, and other individuals. (Hence the lack of an index is criminal.) He insisted that *Roderick Hudson* was James's masterpiece—not a bad choice, though I wish he had preferred *The American.* Perhaps he would have, if he had read it. Hudson tells one anecdote which must I think be taken with salt. "He had a pose about his early work—he pretended to disparage it; but a friend of mine and his once said to him: 'Maybe you'll be furious with me for saying that *Roderick Hudson* is your greatest book.' He started back, threw up his hands in his usual way, and said: 'Well, well,

well—you think so! You think so!—dear! dear!' Then suddenly sinking his voice he whispered: 'You are right—I think so too.'" Was it the hero's name that made W. H. like it so much?

Hudson showed good judgment in admiring James's posthumous fragment, *The Sense of the Past.* Had the author lived to finish it, he would have achieved another masterpiece.

Amy Lowell's famous poem, *Patterns*, is criticised unfavourably, because of its botanical errors. I had not noticed them.

Despite the excellence of Hudson's mind, there was a streak of childishness in the man. I do not refer to his childlike simplicity of manner, which was one of his most beautiful traits; no, I mean childishness. Among his novels there are two, *Fan* and *Ralph Herne*, which are almost inconceivably crude; and his remarks on war, which naturally and properly shocked Mr. Garnett, illustrate this same immaturity. He took an attitude toward English society like Tennyson's in the opening stanzas of *Maud;* prolonged peace made social and commercial life rotten, and war would be a glorious and much-needed remedy. This may have been a survival of the savagery of his South American days, where so many were engaged in the pleasing pastime of cutting each other's throats. Hudson never felt at ease in sophisticated society; he hated it, and preferred to roam on foot or on his bicycle, talking by the way with shepherds, rustics, little

children, and very old men. In November 1913, he wrote: "I hope to stay on to see the flame of war brighten this peace-rotten land. It will look very beautiful to many watchers and have a wonderful, purifying effect." A few weeks later, speaking of Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*, he says: "Well, her picture is true; it is as rotten and contemptible a society as—ours, and once more I thank the gods *we* are going to have a touch of war, the only remedy for the present disease." It is natural, though not consistent, that in September 1914, we find him writing: "The talk is war—war, war, and I'm weary of it. . . . My hope and prayer is that we may crush the mighty war lord, God's friend and favourite, utterly before long, and so have a normal life for the world once more." Evidently he forgot that he had written this, for in February 1915, he writes; "You think it a 'cursed war,' I think it a blessed war. And it was quite time we had one for our purification . . . from the degeneration and the rottenness which comes of everlasting peace . . . the blood that is being shed will purge us of many hateful qualities—of our caste feeling, of our detestable partisanship, our gross selfishness, and a hundred more. Let us thank the gods for a Wilhelm and a nation insane with hatred of England to restore us to health." Hudson's only regret was that it was not a civil war, which he thought had even higher antiseptic virtues.

When Hudson is talking about birds, he speaks

with the authority of a master; when he talks about war, he seems like a small boy.

The beautiful limited edition of his works, in twenty-four volumes, is now complete. It is one of the finest examples of the art of the publisher that I have seen; and I advise all lovers of Hudson who have the necessary money to secure a set before it is too late. One look at these tall books, so big and so light, would make any reader surrender on the spot. The type is as good as borax for the eyes.

The new *Life of W. S. Gilbert*, by Sidney Dark and Rowland Grey, is a disappointment. It is a pity that one who was so witty in himself was not the cause of more wit in his biographers. The biography is an important and valuable work, for it abounds in details which have the signs of accuracy; furthermore, there are many delightful quotations from Gilbert's verses, and it is interesting to know the dates and lists of actors of the operas; but the literary style of the book is uninspired.

Charles N. Abernethy, of Pittsburgh, having read in *Scribner's* my tribute to Stewart's novel, *Valley Waters*, and to the town it describes, writes me:

"Sat down Monday eve to read *Valley Waters* and finished the story before I went to bed. Haven't done anything like that for years. As you say, it is a bully story. Am creating a larger demand for it here by boosting it. The book should be read by the following people:

1st all who now live in Zanesville; 2nd all who have lived there but now live elsewhere; 3rd all who do not belong to either of these classes."

Among recent autobiographies, I recommend *The Iron Puddler*, by James J. Davis, Secretary of Labour. No one will find this book dull. I think that Mr. Davis would be an ideal mediator between capital and labour, as he has the necessary knowledge that can come only from the understanding born of experience. America may not be the greatest country in the world, but it is certainly the most fortunate. Of all nations, past and present, America is the land of opportunity. To mention four autobiographies: *The Americanization of Edward Bok; From Immigrant to Inventor*, by Michael Pupin; *Children of Loneliness*, by Anzia Yezierska, and *The Iron Puddler*, by James J. Davis; they prove what foreigners have accomplished in the United States. And what a bad thing it would be for us if we refused entrance to immigrants, if we followed any such absurd slogan as *America for Americans!*

And is there any other country in the world where there could be such a career as is described in *A Log Cabin Lady?*

A new volume of poems has appeared, which to conservatives will seem admirable, and to radicals a detestable curiosity. This is *The Ring of Love*, by Brookes More, a brother of the distinguished scholar, Paul Elmer More. Its out-

ward semblance is as "reactionary" as its contents. It looks like an old-fashioned gift-book of the vintage of 1850. It has gilt edges, sports a ribbon-marker, and its full-page illustrations look as though they had been taken from Godey. Considerable courage both in author and editor was required to issue just such a book at just such a time as the present; but it is deliberately meant as a challenge to all the experimenters of the twentieth century, from the best to Gertrude Stein. The author, in a defiant preface, consigns the whole modern crew to oblivion; and declares that there is plenty of room in the variety of established metres for every poet who has anything to say. Accordingly his lyrics are inspired not only by imagination and passion, but by a love of form; it appears that over twenty distinct forms have been employed. The suspicion that such a method arouses in the reader is partly justified; many of the poems are more careful in technique than they are careless in rapture. Still, there are enough authentic lyrics to make the book a contribution to American contemporary poetry; and they are written by one who knows thoroughly the history of versification.

Is this the first bugle call against the excesses of contemporary free verse? If so, its publication is significant. But I do not worry about our ridiculous American poetasters, however mightily they advertise themselves, and however strong the gusts of puffery behind their

sails; "as my Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, *not being of God, they cannot stand.*" The best living poets in England are as unlike our freeversifiers as could well be imagined; Kipling, De La Mare, Hodgson, Masefield, Noyes, Yeats, Housman, seem quite unaffected by the "new" poetry; and in America our leaders, Robinson, Frost, Lindsay, Anna Branch, Sara Teasdale, somehow or other manage to attract attention without indulging in discords. They are self-starters; the freeversifiers are usually started by some crank, and attract notice only by leaving their mufflers open.

I am glad to see that one of our younger poets, Hervey Allen, has published separately his masterpiece, *The Blindman: A Ballad of Nogent L'Artaud*, which in 1921 was included in his volume, *Wampum and Old Gold.* I defy anyone to read this poem without thrills; if it is not genuine poetry, I will eat the author's complete works.

I view the present theatrical season in London and New York with particular satisfaction, because two cardinal articles in my dramatic creed —for which I have long suffered abuse—receive effective support. I believe that *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the greatest drama since *Faust*, and the finest play in any language since Shakespeare; it is also my opinion that Walter Hampden is one of the most admirable actors of our generation. This week his production of *Cyrano* reaches its one hundredth performance, and seats are selling

merrily four weeks ahead. My second article of belief is that J. M. Barrie is the foremost living playwright in the world. At this moment, five of his plays are being acted in five theatres in London. Not one of them is new, but each and all are revivals. It is quite the fashion for critics to sneer at Barrie as a sentimentalist, a facile producer of smiles and tears. But where shall we find a dramatist of to-day who is so thorough a master of the art of the theatre? He defies classification, in the same way that human beings defy it. He belongs to no school, writes no propaganda, and, instead of being interested in contemporary fads and political opinions, he deals only with fundamental, eternal emotions, instincts, and passions. Inasmuch as it is impossible for over one hundred million Americans to see his plays, it is fortunate that many of them have been published, and with such peculiar and original stage directions that the books take the reader straight into the theatre. Let me recommend to the thousands of reading clubs in our country the study of Barrie's plays. A year could profitably be spent on the half-dozen volumes that have appeared.

Bernard Shaw's new play, *Saint Joan*, is not so great as *Candida*, or *Major Barbara*, or *The Doctor's Dilemma*, or *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. But it is of course brilliant and challenging, and reaches a vertiginous height in the trial scene. The appeal of the Inspired Maid to all sorts and conditions of men is one of the most interesting

facts in history. She was burned about five hundred years ago—and Shakespeare, who wrote his historical plays mainly as nationalistic propaganda, represented her as no better than a street-walker assisted by the fiends of hell. Please reread as a curiosity *King Henry VI, Part I.* If a secret ballot of the entire world could be taken to-day on the question, "Who is the most popular woman in secular history?" I believe that Joan of Arc would lead the list. It is a surprising fact that some twenty-five years ago, three men temperamentally unsympathetic toward Joan should each have written a monumental work about her: Anatole France, Andrew Lang, and Mark Twain. It was natural that Schiller should make her the heroine of a drama; her appeal to Bernard Shaw is a better tribute to her magnetic power. Never has she stood so high in popular estimation as now; and yet it is clear that her fame is only in its dawn. Unless all signs fail, fifty years hence she will dominate the minds and imaginations of men as never before. How strange it is that this ignorant girl should reach out hands from the grave and clutch the heartstrings of mankind! Perhaps it is partly because she really believed in Something. Cynicism and scepticism may amuse society and, by that strange contradiction so evident in human nature, may flatter the intelligence of those who are pleased with themselves; but this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

If the great Voltaire were alive to-day, he would not write *La Pucelle*. After all, perhaps he would.

As a national idol of France, Joan is rising, Napoleon is falling. I suppose it is one more indication of the defeat of intellect by character. To compare the ex-Kaiser with the Emperor Napoleon is to compare the ridiculous with the sublime—for the Kaiser's ability was not equal to his ambition, whereas Napoleon was almost as clever as Satan—yet the comparison of the two men is, after all, favourable to the Kaiser. He wanted the earth and did not care how he got it; but he wanted it for Germany, and always thought of himself as the incarnate German Empire. I do not believe that Napoleon cared a rush for France; he cared for nothing except himself. He would rather have been Emperor of England than a subordinate officer in France.

A new book, which is bound to attract general attention, and which certainly deserves it, is *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend*, by Albert Leon Guérard, of the Rice Institute of Texas. His opening chapter, *On Historical Legends in General*, proves his competence to undertake this particular task. In the pages that follow, he examines the growth of Napoleon's reputation, from the beginning even until now. This necessarily leads him to examine the hero himself, and I should think the examination would make Napoleon turn over in his splendid tomb. Many will differ from Professor Guérard in his estima-

tion of Napoleon's mental powers; both H. G. Wells and our author fail, I think, to convince the reader that Napoleon's intellect was anything short of colossal; but nothing is left of Napoleon's character. I remember when I was studying history under one of the most impressive of Yale's teachers, William Graham Sumner, he looked up from his notes one day, and said emphatically: "There is no doubt that Napoleon was one of the most cold-hearted rascals that ever lived."

Professor Guérard's book is a weighty contribution to the subject; it is exactly the kind of book that ought to have been written. I am fascinated by it; I read it with unflagging attention. But I am a little surprised to find in it no mention of Emerson's *Essay on Napoleon.* One of the clearest proofs of the genius of Emerson is that in 1850 he published an estimate of Napoleon's ability, character, and career that subsequent books on the subject, when written by dispassionate scholars, like Guérard, have confirmed. Emerson showed clearly in what ways Napoleon was great, for what reasons he was idolised, and why he failed. During the years 1914–1918 I read that inspiring essay every year, for it seemed to prove that where Napoleon had failed Wilhelm could not succeed. I wish that everybody would do two things: read this excellent book by Professor Guérard and, immediately afterward, read Emerson's essay; I think most will agree with me that Emerson gave the defini-

tive, final, unshakable estimate of the man Napoleon Bonaparte.

Unlimited power is worse for the average person than unlimited alcohol; and the resulting intoxication is more damaging for others. Very few have not deteriorated when given absolute dominion; it is worse for the governor than for the governed. It is the basis of the ever-growing fame of both Washington and Lincoln that the more power they received, the more they showed themselves worthy of it; they are exceptions; in the list of American Presidents they stand apart.

I was brought up in the extreme Puritanical, Protestant, anti-ritualistic manner of religious doctrine and worship. In my childhood I thought that all Catholics and all Democrats were going to hell. I am therefore interested in my own interest in Compton Mackenzie's novels dealing with the Anglo-Catholic movement. Last year I commented in these articles on the first of the trilogy, called *The Altar Steps;* I have just read the second, called *The Parson's Progress*, which I like even better; and I am awaiting the third with growing impatience and eagerness. I do not know if many readers will share my enthusiasm; but the characters in these two novels seem very real to me, and I follow the protagonist's mental development like a hound on a fresh scent. The conversations are exceedingly well done; and every point of view seems presented with fairness. There are no exciting ob-

jective adventures; all the excitement is in the hero's mind, and, as Fox said of Browning's *Pauline*, "the whole composition is of the spirit, spiritual. The scenery is in the chambers of thought; the agencies are powers and passions; the events are transitions from one state of spiritual existence to another." The last adjective for these novels would be *humorous;* yet there is an underlying quiet humour that comes out occasionally in a manner as delightful as it is unexpected. To illustrate: "When St. Paul compared the relation of Christ to His Church with that of a husband to his wife, he certainly never imagined such a perfect lady as the Church of England."

An inner delight to me in the perusal of *The Parson's Progress* is the thought of how intensely D. H. Lawrence would hate it.

Compton Mackenzie is assuredly not narrow. In the same month he publishes *The Parson's Progress*, also another full-length and highly interesting novel called *The Seven Ages of Woman*, where religion is hardly more than mentioned, and the regular issue of his magazine, *The Gramophone*. But this diversity is normal and natural; everyone who is interested in religion should be interested in everything else, for religion gives vitality and significance to all things.

I am glad to add another bookshop to the rapidly increasing list of those worthy of the name, those conducted by intelligent and highly edu-

cated experts. This latest one to reach my attention is "The Medical Standard Book Company," in Baltimore, which despite its name, sells "every kind of book." One of the staff writes me: "The presiding genius is a large entirely black cat, named Cicero, a wise old cat worthy of the name in everything except loquacity, which I believe is contrary to cat nature. Cicero has always been a favourite with customers as well as the staff, and the only difficulty has been in restraining his propensity to pick out a table of special editions or other expensive volumes for his afternoon nap. Cicero has a practical value too; for the rats give the place a wide berth here, and we never have any volumes gnawed to plug the chinks of a rat-nest, as Hamlet might say." Other good bookshops, in addition to those I have already mentioned, are Emily Hoopes's Walnut Street Bookshop, in Philadelphia; The Dunster Bookshop, in Cambridge, and the Old Brick Row Print and Book Shop, in New Haven, which has branches in New York and Princeton. Let me not forget to add that after trying in a score of places to find a copy of *The Wheels of Chance*, I finally secured one last August in Leary's Old Bookshop in Philadelphia, and last week I got another copy in the same emporium.

Mr. Thomas Sergeant Perry is not only admitted to the Asolo Club, with all its rights and privileges, but he is the only man who joined the

club long before it was founded. He entered Asolo in the nineteenth century, and I think others will agree with me in declaring him to be our one and only Honorary Member.

With reference to the story containing "the four fat raisins," with which I ended my December contribution, I have received two letters, one from Portland, Oregon, the other from Dallas, Texas. The former says the title of the story is *Five Pounds of Cinnamon*, and was published in a book called *Lil's Travels in Santa Claus Land*. My Texas friend says the name of the story is *Roxy's Day of Judgment*, and it was published in a book the title of which he cannot remember. I am sure that Roxy was the name of the little girl, and the Texan says she bought the raisins and cinnamon. So both Oregon and Texas are evidently dealing with precisely the same story. Could it have been reissued in a name other than the one it had on its first appearance? This is a fine literary problem.

Nothing except the ridicule of foreign missionaries is commoner than the ridicule of Sunday-school books; and I admit that most of those I read in my childhood were marked by a plentiful lack of wit. But there was one Sunday-school book which I read fifty years ago, and is as clear in my mind as though I had finished it yesterday. I wonder if any others recall it. It was called *Drifting and Steering* (an excellent title), and

dealt with a quartette of young people, Walter, Owen, Honor, and Phemie. It differed from most Sunday-school books in having the villain get the better of the hero all through the volume, until at the very last he made a death-bed confession; even now the boys and girls in the story seem extremely well portrayed, and such incidents as the fire and the narrow escape from drowning, where the good dog was lost, will never be forgotten by me. A few years ago I came upon a copy of the novel; it was written by Lynde Palmer, a pen-name for Mrs. Peebles. Immediately I looked up Mrs. Peebles in *Who's Who*, and to my regret discovered that she had very recently died, at about the age of ninety. I wish that I might have told her of my admiration for that book. It was one of the best stories I read in my childhood, and made a permanent and beneficial impression on my mind. Many Sunday-school books were maudlin, and could not be taken seriously by anybody in good health. I have just received a letter from a lady who knew me when I was ten years old (I have not seen her since), and she writes that when my mother was chosen to serve on a committee to select books for a Sunday-school in a church in Providence, I particularly begged mother not to select books "where the children died with the triumphs."

A correspondent suggests *Sordello* for the Ignoble Prize. This cannot be accepted, because

that poem has few friends. It takes no daring to attack *Sordello*, which William Sharp called "that colossal derelict upon the ocean of poetry." It would require courage to confess admiration for it, for one who did so would be universally suspected not of unusual talents in criticism but of unusual talents in lying. To be a proper candidate for the Ignoble Prize, the object must be one that is almost universally esteemed, so that to confess a dislike of it or an inability to appreciate it, means running the risk of misprision and contempt. Let me then name two candidates for the Ignoble Prize which may cost me what little good reputation I have painfully acquired in half a century. These two are *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*. To me they are bores—colossal bores. The Don tilted against windmills; hence I wish he had tilted against the author of his being. As for *Tristram Shandy*, I might enjoy it if it were not so dull. *The Life and Times of Sterne*, by the accomplished Wilbur Cross, is to me far more interesting than anything by his hero.

The annual dinner of the Fano Club will be held in New Haven on Browning's birthday, 7 May 1924, at 7.30 P. M.

Doctor W. W. Keen asks me if I can do anything to stop the practice of using substitutes for the first personal pronoun. When he was revising a vast medical work, he went through all the

pages, and whenever he came to "the author," "the writer," etc., he substituted "I." Such synonyms are a kind of awkward false modesty that really attracts more attention to the "writer" than if he had frankly said "I." I agree with this distinguished surgeon, and the proof of it is the title of this department which I am conducting.

The American novelist William Henry Bishop, who was present at that famous Boston dinner, in 1877, when Mark Twain shocked Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and others, writes me for information that I can supply only in an unsatisfactory manner. He wishes to know who changed the grammar of Shakespeare into present usage. Shakespeare did not hesitate to use many expressions which are now certainly bad grammar. Well, the English people did this gradually; and the fact that Shakespeare used what is now bad grammar does not make it good grammar for us. If we followed him in that respect, we should be imitating him in the only manner possible, it is true, but it would do neither him nor us any good. Usage makes dictionaries, and not the other way around. And yet here is a singular thing: the Authorised Version of the Bible was published when Shakespeare was alive; yet, though there are many mistakes in grammar in Shakespeare, as judged by the twentieth century, there are only two in the Bible: *Whom do men say that I am?* and *heavier*

than them both, Proverbs xxvii : 3. Was there a vernacular and a literary language then, and did Shakespeare follow the man in the street rather than the man higher up?

Another correspondent writes on "the growing use of the term 'worth while,' which I had supposed meant 'worth the time it takes.' Common speech now asks a contribution to be quite 'worth while.' Here is a Bishop, asking that his 'church exhibit the only tolerance that was worth while.'" Well, I hereby confer on such loose uses of the expression my official damnation and I excommunicate the Bishop from all association with English-speaking people. Still, his offence is nothing compared to the daily-growing use of the word *alibi*, which is a custom particularly detestable, and for which there is no *alibi*.

I have received such a vast number of letters dealing with cats and dogs that it is impossible to quote from more than one or two. A nun writes me from a far-away convent that all her life she has had the same passion for fur that I confessed; she not only loves cats, but longs to stroke every fur cloak she sees. Hail, kindred spirit! A letter of gentle mockery comes from one who writes: "A friend of mine once had a turtle as a pet, and his silence, his wisdom, his imperturbability and his patience (patience to the *n*th degree) far outshone the cat." Well, the turtle has his merits; and it is on record that he

won a race with a more gifted animal. I myself doubt it; at all events, I am certain that, whoever won the race, it was won by a hair. A man from Hannibal, Missouri, wishes to know why, if the cat is a silent animal, he makes such an infernal noise in fighting. "To the dweller in the modern city flat, cat fights are a rarity, but let him jiggle the jigglers on his radio set and he has about the best imitation I can think of. Have you ever witnessed the meeting of two tom-cats and watched how they begin to comment loudly on the ancestry, and its degradation, of their adversary? After preliminary swearing and blasphemy is done, the song of hate rises higher and higher, then with a final and ear-splitting scream of obscenity they launch themselves into sanguinary conflict." He compares this noisy method with the grim silence of the bulldog. My answer is that the bulldog has no sense of humour. Fighting with him is serious. He does not fight like a gentleman for the sake of the sport, but only for victory. The cat, on the other hand, enjoys abusive conversations like an Irishman or a cab-driver; he doesn't mean it; he is laughing in his fur all the time. A lady writes that Doctor Weir Mitchell made a study of "those people who could tell that a cat, though invisible to the eye, was in the room, but I do not know what conclusions he reached. He recognised it as a nerve disorder but I do not know what he did for it." Another writes: "But the thrill I had when I saw my own and present pet kitten deco-

rating the cover of *Scribner's!* I am convinced that she has posed for it—how else could it be so exactly her portrait?"

One of the best of all cat books is *The Alley Rabbit*, by James H. Penniman, and the most deeply affecting cat poem I ever read is Thomas Hardy's *Last Words to a Dumb Friend*, in the volume *Late Lyrics and Earlier*.

I promise to say nothing more about cats in these articles for a long time, for it is impossible that the majority of my readers should share my feline ecstasies. Let me close the subject now by remarking that when I was a boy I felt real regret to learn that Julius Cæsar had conquered the Catti, and was only partially comforted by discovering that the island where Columbus landed, San Salvador, had in later years been rechristened Cat Island.

X

I WAS pleased to see the March number of *Scribner's Magazine* leading off with an excellent short story, called *Bachelors of Arts*, by Edward Venable; because I am firm in the faith that his novel *Pierre Vinton* is a work of distinction. For some unknown reason it has never attracted general attention; yet whoever, at my instigation, has read it has done so with enthusiasm. Mr. Beach, the director of Beach's Bookshop in Indianapolis, is convinced that it is still possible to bring *Pierre Vinton* and the public together. Therefore, once more I advertise the book, confident that any intelligent person who reads that brilliant and time-cheating novel will enjoy it. I also believe that the day will come when Mr. Venable will be almost as well known as he deserves to be.

Doctor Eugene Watson Burlingame is performing a valuable service for English readers in his translations from the Pāli (a dialect of Sanskrit that originated in northern India about 700 B. C.). In 1921 he published, in three tall and beautifully printed volumes, the Buddhist legends, consisting of short stories which are decidedly more interesting than the average man would imagine. The introduction, giving an ac-

count of the life of the Buddha, and preparing the reader for the stories by indicating the proper way to approach them, is particularly well done. Many of the narratives are dramatic, not a few are humorous, and it makes for a liberal education to become familiar with these tales. In 1922 Doctor Burlingame published another translation, called *Buddhist Parables*, and in 1923 he added to our debt by selecting twenty-six tales from this larger work and issuing them in one attractive volume called *The Grateful Elephant and Other Stories*. This is intended to be a book for children, and the intention is realised. To quote from his prefatory note: "The translation is a close, idiomatic rendering of the original Pāli text. . . . The author has not, however, 'written down' any of the stories in order to remove such difficulties as the original translation may present to the child." There are ten full-page illustrations, which will stimulate the imagination of boys and girls. Here is a fine opportunity to combine instruction with entertainment, and to widen the horizon of the mind.

Another new and exceedingly important book by Carlyle! This is a volume containing his letters—never before printed—to John Stuart Mill, to John Sterling, to Robert Browning. Whether one can or cannot read straight through *The French Revolution*, one cannot possibly fail to be interested in everything that concerns the personality of its author. These letters reveal his

innate nobility, his humour, his infinite charm; for charming he certainly was. The letters to Mill show his capacity for friendship, and although the two young men drifted far apart, they never forgot their early intimacy. The letters exchanged on the tragic occasion of the loss of Carlyle's manuscript are not only dramatic, they reveal the rectitude of the minds of both. An exchange of thoughts between two such men is inspiring. Inasmuch as Carlyle is thought by some to have lost entirely the religious faith in which he was nurtured, it may be well to quote the letter he wrote to Mill on 20 January 1834:

"Best of all do I sympathise with you in regard to the New Testament. Every word I say is spoken out of my heart. Great, soul-inspiring, unfathomable in significance, is that poor artless Biography by Saint Matthew! Of all *Antigigmen* too, in any time, in any place, the greatest is that divine Hero of Saint Matthew. A thousand times have his words, even through all *these* impediments, brought life and hope back into my heart: I have wept warm tears, as I thought of *him;* and how the voice of his Glad Tidings (the *gladdest* of all; for it was of man's indefeasible divineness) had gone forth to all lands, had reached even the English land and me. "*Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world*": I!—if you consider that, and who the *I* was, a whole Gospel lies in it.—Saint John I regard with you as a kind of *didactic* Biographer, less taken up with his hero than with what he

fancies to be his hero's philosophy; of far inferior value therefore; less artless, perhaps one might say less sincere. On the whole, it is the thorough *heartiness*, the intense and entire *sincerity* of the Bible that makes it still the Book of Books. In no other Book is there the same quality in such a degree; some touches of it (under circumstances strangely new) I meet with in Goethe, almost alone of the moderns. I advise you to persevere in reading the Bible (in *seeing* it, through all distances and disguises): that here too you have discarded *Dilettantism*, and can earnestly look at the Earnest, this is a new pleasure to me."

Here is another tribute to the Bible, 13 June 1833:

"Will you understand me if I say there is still no Book in the whole world where I find the Spiritual Warfare of Men tenth-part so faithfully delineated, so cheeringly too, and instructively when once you have got to *read* it, as in the Jewish *Book*, well named the Book of Books? I protest, it is even so. In fine then I bid you go on unflinchingly, not resting till your "Doubting-Castle" Prison is burst asunder; *love* the Truth, and the Truth now as heretofore *will* make you free."

Writing to Browning, 25 April 1856, on *Men and Women*, he saw and said that Browning was the leading poet of the age.

"Such a faculty of talent, 'genius' if you like the name better, seems to me *worth* cultivating, worth sacrificing oneself to tame and subdue into perfection;—none more so, that I know, of men now alive. Nay, in a private way, I admit to myself that here apparently is the *finest* poetic genius, finest possibility of such, we have got vouchsafed us in this generation, and that it will be a terrible pity if we spill it in the process of elaboration. Said genius, too, I perceive, has really *grown*, in all ways, since I saw it last; I hope it will continue growing, though the difficulties are neither few nor small!"

In the column, *The Saturday Contributor*, appearing in the Waterbury *American*, Mrs. Case and I are justly rebuked for not being able to finish *The French Revolution.* After trying not five, but five-and-twenty times, Carl Chapin himself went through it like a needle through cheese. He writes:

"At the start it is as repellent as a chapter of Sanskrit. But the time comes, say after a hundred pages or so—at least it did come with The Contributor—when the reader catches stride with the style and, thereafter, it is a thing of delight in itself. The other discouraging factor is the obscure method of treatment. It is not direct historical narrative. Rather it is a critical discussion of matters which the writer appears to assume are as familiar, in their main outlines, to the reader as they are to himself. Characters leap abruptly into the story and carry it along

for page after page without revealing to the uninitiated who they may be or what relation their actions may bear to the main thread of the plot. It all seems diffuse, episodic, superficial, and extremely puzzling. Yet at the end, casting back, it will usually be found that Carlyle has, in his outlandish way, painted his picture of personality and action with a comprehensiveness and minuteness such as few writers attain.

The Contributor believes that his own success in this final attack on the *French Revolution* was mainly due to the fact that, just previously, *Scaramouche* had set him to browsing among the biographies and histories of the period, so that he went into action with the main characters and the thread of the plot vividly fresh in his mind and thus was able to foil Carlyle's best efforts to throw him off the track. He recommends the method to Billy Phelps and Elizabeth Case and all other unfortunates who have thus far been deprived of the delight that lies in complete victory over this wonderful exposition of the workings of human nature upon the history of mankind."

Well, Waterbury has a true bill against both Hartford and New Haven. I not only feel under conviction of sin, but I hereby promise that I will finish *The French Revolution* unless it finishes me.

Georg Brandes and Benedetto Croce are perhaps the most influential and the most universally respected of living literary critics. They

are philosophers and citizens of the world. An excellent brief biography and appraisal of the former may be found in English, in a book of 150 pages, written by Julius Moritzen, *Georg Brandes in Life and Letters*, while Croce's book on Goethe will add to the author's steadily growing reputation.

Yet I am not of those who hold that foreign authors are *ipso facto* better than those who use our mother tongue. I have never bowed the knee to Ibáñez, who seems to me not a creative artist, but a caterer; and Papini's *The Failure* (*Un Uomo Finito*) is an autobiographical novel wherein the writer has filled his belly with the East Wind. That sounds like Mah-Jong, but it is really a quotation from the Bible. The book is an eruption of egotism, giving the inner life of a poor but ambitious youth who, while despising the world and all its inhabitants except one, could not be happy unless he became famous—that is, he was eager for the worship of those for whose critical judgment he had contempt; in which attitude he is not unique. He bellows out his turgid dreams, hopes, doubts, fears, in a manner that is meant to be impressive and is tiresome. When one reads such a gallimaufry, one feels that after all there may be something to be said for our Anglo-Saxon reserve. Every imaginative and bookish boy, every ambitious and cloudy adolescent, has wild dreams—he is continually the protagonist of sombre tragedies and of romantic comedies played on the stage of his own

brain. But a respect for his own personality and for the time and rights of others inhibits him from dumping these crudities and vagaries on the printed page. Papini has a fiery heart, a glowing, passionate temperament which, if controlled, might produce valuable works of literature; but the words restraint, reserve, and tolerance are to him unknown. When he was an atheist he was sure that every one was an ass who was anything else; now that he is a Christian, all who differ from him are intellectually contemptible and morally perverted. The book is a good one to omit. I hope that the translator, who has done her work very well indeed, will select next time something more worthy of her talents.

I can never sufficiently praise that series of books known as The Loeb Classical Library; one of the latest additions is assuredly of the best, and will have a particularly wide appeal. This small volume contains Cicero's beautiful and intimate essays on Old Age, on Friendship, and on Divination, translated into elegant and suave English by William Armistead Falconer, emeritus judge of the tenth chancery circuit of Arkansas. The British have not a complete monopoly of men who combine scholarship and public life; this translation was made, purely for the love of it, by Judge Falconer, in moments snatched from work, on trains, in hotels, and other unlikely places. Then it was thoroughly revised, but still

with no thought of publication until the poet Brookes More, also of Arkansas, saw the manuscript, gave it to his brother Paul, who in turn showed it to Edward Capps, the American editor of the Loeb Series. Such a work is a credit to America.

A short time ago a business man read the translation of Cicero on Old Age to his wife, disguising the authorship and the Latin names; she believed it to be a contemporary work. It is indeed singularly modern in sentiment—and now infinitely more interesting than those blowy orations of Cicero we were all forced to read at school!

Didn't my friend Mencken say somewhere that there were no intelligent persons in the State of Arkansas? When I was in Little Rock a few years ago, I did homage to the governor of the State, because his enemies said he cared more for literature than for politics.

To those who are still unfamiliar with the most humorous book produced by the war, let me recommend *Les Silences du Colonel Bramble*, by André Maurois, which is an unmitigated joy. For as Samson drew honey from the carcass of a lion, sweetness from strength, so M. Maurois has extracted the essence of humour from the darkest tragedy of modern times.

And I have just finished reading a book of unclouded mirth. It has nothing to do with the war; it has nothing to do with anything except spontaneous fun. This is *Leave it to Psmith* by

the English novelist, P. G. Wodehouse. It is a full-length novel, continuously and irresistibly humorous, without once becoming dull or flat. Any one who could read it and not surrender ought to see a specialist. I will guarantee this book; and if any reader does not like it, he should be exhibited among the curiosities in a museum. I lent a copy to a professor of physiological chemistry—a study that ought to add seriousness to life—and reading it late at night, he emitted such a series of chirps, yelps, barks, and guffaws that his daughter sprang from bed and came running down-stairs to see what was the matter.

General Charles H. Sherrill is an all-around man. When he was an undergraduate he was famous as an athlete. He established many new records and won seven intercollegiate championships. Since that time he has been a lawyer and a diplomat, in which latter capacity he served as United States minister to Argentina. As brigadier-general and adjutant-general, in the State of New York, he was in charge of the United States draft, 1917–1918. A great sprinter in college, he has since become an accomplished globe-trotter, having written many books about world-problems, the Monroe Doctrine, America's policy in the Far East. He has interviewed nearly all the prime ministers in Europe, and his latest book, *The Purple or the Red*, shows that he has interviewed many kings. His photographs reveal their majesties in informal attitudes, and

are signed with the royal chirograph. On the same day that this work on international politics was published in New York, another book of a quite different nature by the same author was published in London. This is *Stained Glass Tours in Spain and Flanders*, with seventeen illustrations and two maps. He had previously issued three volumes, dealing with stained-glass tours respectively in England, in France, in Italy. They make admirable guide-books to the glorious cathedrals in Europe. I do not know which side of General Sherrill's activities—the political or the artistic—he himself enjoys more. But, although all his writings are lively—for he is a born interviewer—I personally prefer the ones on stained glass because I find cathedrals more interesting than politics.

Another book of travel that I recommend is *Old Morocco and the Forbidden Atlas*, by Professor Clarence E. Andrews. It is a true tale of adventure, copiously illustrated. The author's style is so vivid that one sees the scenery through the prose.

A very good book on religion, good because it is simple and not at all controversial, is *Why I Believe in Religion*, by Charles R. Brown, Dean of the Yale Divinity School. The six chapters were originally lectures; and so great was the interest when they were spoken in New Haven in the autumn of 1923, that the first four had to be

delivered in different halls, each bigger than its predecessor. Had Doctor Brown given a seventh lecture, he would have had to move to the Yale Bowl, as the largest auditorium in the city was too small. There is no subject more interesting than religion; I saw in the newspapers that when Harry Fosdick lectured in Chicago, a number of persons were injured in the mad scramble of the crowd to get inside the building. Why on earth, then, should so many sermons be dry? Surely it is not the fault of the theme.

Perhaps the cause of the siccous nature of so many sermons is also the cause of so many failures in business, of so many ineffective lawyers, of so many fifth-rate professors, dramatists, musicians, painters—but why go on? "Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement," said Browning. As the majority of human beings have neither black nor yellow hair, but brownish; as the majority of singers can neither go very low nor very high, but are either mezzos or barytones; as the majority of writers are neither brilliant nor stupid; as the majority of citizens are neither heroes nor criminals, but just folks—why expect genius in the pulpit? An impartial history of humanity would be a record of the commonplace. Yet many persons are both interesting and lovable if studied with intelligence, understanding, and sympathy.

Rose Macaulay's novel, *Told by an Idiot*, is the best book she has written since *Potterism*. It is the story of the last three generations, in which

she shows that folly is always in fashion. The title, however, is misleading. Shakespeare did not say that human life was a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. His own career is a sufficient refutation. He placed that appraisal of life in the mouth of a murderer, who tried to gain the whole world and became bankrupt. From his own point of view, his final assets were nothing. But Macbeth himself very well knew the kind of old age he might have had.

> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have.

To regard human beings satirically is no more a sign of intelligence than to regard them sympathetically. Dickens was as great a genius as any of the masters of irony. The novelist often is, however, as in the case of Rose Macaulay, a historian of manners; and to any cool observer the game of life seems more absurd than to those who are actively engaged in it. A looker-on at the Stock Exchange, at a football game, at a religious revival-meeting, at a political convention, might easily regard the spectacle as equivalent to a madhouse; but it has significance to those who are participants. To those who do not care for golf, the excitement of the players seems absurd; to those who do not care for religion, the exhortations of the preacher or the life in a convent would appear to be the last word in futility;

to those who care nothing for art, the eager discussions about tone and colour would seem silly. Fortunately the largest proportion of people are not spectators; they are too busy with their own particular jobs; the work of the world is being carried on by men and women in the dust and heat, and they know that life is neither a tragedy nor a comedy, but an opportunity. To have a home, with wife and children in it, to earn honestly enough to meet the day's needs, is not to be either ridiculous or disgusting. Ask any such "forgotten man" what he thinks of the value of life, and his look of enquiry will make you ashamed.

It is curious how differently people regard human beings. Some, upon entering a trolley-car, hate every one else in the vehicle; some look upon the crowd at a street corner with disgust; it must be wonderful to have such a sense of superiority, to have such faith in one's own splendid intellect. The most amusing thing is to enter a fashionable hotel, and as you advance to the office desk, followed by your travelling bags, to glance for a moment at those individuals who, having already been there some days, now gaze at you from their settled and comfortable chairs. They look at you as though you were garbage. In the same way, many people, travelling in foreign lands, hate all their fellow-countrymen whom they meet. This scorn used to distress me, just as I used to be disturbed by the contempt of a waiter in a hotel or a butler in a fashionable mansion;

now I am only amused; and instead of being sorry for myself, I am sorry for those who sit in the seat of the scornful. One may have a certain satisfaction in a feeling of complacency or superiority, but such an emotion is not so desirable as the cheerfulness produced by a general sympathy for mankind.

When one thinks of the vast folly displayed in human history, it is easy to despise human nature; but when one thinks of the vast number of individuals who, with little money, little education, little ability, nevertheless put up a brave front and meet the day's work with uncomplaining serenity, then it is impossible not to see that human nature is sublime.

Still, there is an intellectual pleasure in reading a brilliant review of the human scene which Bunyan called Vanity Fair. Rose Macaulay's novel, showing that the younger generation is always just that, and the older generation just that, is well worth an attentive perusal. Satire is valuable provided we apply it first of all to ourselves; then we shall not only enjoy it, but make it profitable. This is why I found Miss Macaulay's *Potterism* so delectable; I perceived that there was not only a streak of potterism in every human being, but a large percentage of the same in my own mind; I determined to lessen it, and although you may find it impossible to believe me, I really have got rid of some of it; not all, of course.

If one takes satire as applicable only to others,

if one listens to a sermon only with the fervent wish that one's neighbour could have heard it, then one may be in that ridiculous position where one is laughing heartily at a joke supposedly on some one else, and be the last of the company to perceive where the joke most accurately fits. The mote and the beam.

The Travelers Insurance Company of Hartford has two claims to recognition apart from its *raison d'être;* first, it is the only insurance organisation that has published a literary classic; second, in doing so, it published the only American edition of the works of Walter Bagehot. This edition in five handsome volumes, edited by the accomplished Forrest Morgan, appeared some thirty years ago, and is eagerly sought by book collectors. Perhaps there never was a time when Bagehot's wisdom and humour were more needed than in 1924.

My remarks on golf in a previous chapter drew an interesting letter from the Actuary of the Travelers, Edward B. Morris, who wrote me: "I was particularly interested in your story about the golfer who had trouble at the water hazard, especially as it suggested another actual happening, I believe on the Springfield course, under somewhat similar conditions but with more of a climax; the story of the Springfield golfer being that after he had driven his golf-balls into the pond, he threw in his clubs, then his bag, as you have related, but then—he jumped in himself.

However, there are proofs that such a thing is not entirely unusual. For example; some years ago they drained off the pond that created the water hazard at the ninth hole at the Farmington Country Club and found some 1,400 golf-balls, 23 golf-clubs, and one golf bag."

The mixed information so commonly given in answers to examinations is well illustrated in the following conversation between two American ladies in Venice. I assure my readers it is authentic.

"In 1912 I met in Venice a pretty American widow who was travelling with more trunks and jewellery than brains. One day she asked where I had been. I answered: 'Up on the Rialto.' 'Oh!' she said, 'that is just an old bridge with little nasty shops and no American would think of going there if Shylock Holmes had not written about it.'"

Why worry? I called on President Eliot in his office at Harvard one winter day in 1900; in leaving, I said I hoped to come and see him again on my next visit to Cambridge; he replied that he might not be there. In amazement I enquired if he were going to resign. "Certainly *not;* but, I am sixty-six." This struck me as so funny that I burst out laughing. Had he then known that twenty-four years later he would be both alive and active, he would have been spared much superfluous apprehension. I mention this

for the benefit of that large class of persons who, upon reaching the age of sixty, spend the next thirty years predicting their speedy death.

An eminent scholar sends me the following information, with pungent comment:

"You may be interested to know that a colleague of mine in Zürich, quite a young man and therefore not a mere *laudator temporis acti*, writes me with a sigh audible in spite of the distance that the conferring of doctorates in the German and French Universities is now largely influenced by political considerations. This is too bad, but what does all this matter when we consider that even after a development of hundreds of thousands of years since the stage of the pithecanthropos the majority of people still refuse or at least dislike to see things as they are? However, *sat prata biberunt.*"

Why should any one regard it as an insult to be mistaken for one who does honest work? Coming down to breakfast at seven in a Philadelphia hotel, I saw a man bending over the unlighted newspaper stand. I asked: "Are these to-day's New York papers?" He turned around resentfully and said: "I don't know any more about it than you do." I saw he thought that I thought he was the paper man, and I think he thought the truth. Then the more the idea penetrated his mind, the angrier he became, and he added stuffily: "How would I know any more

about it than you?" Of course he ought to have said, "How *should* I know?" But the time for giving him a lesson in English grammar seemed inopportune; so I merely said: "Sir, your face seemed so intelligent that I thought you could answer any question I should be able to ask." He snorted. But why should he be angry? Once, when I entered a theatre and stood at the top of the aisle, a man and his girl approached; he shoved his tickets into my hands and demanded that I show him his seats. I answered: "I'd do it in a minute, old man, if I had the least idea where they were." Then he profusely apologised, and his companion becomingly blushed. But why apologise? I was not in the least angry—why should I be? At a social function in New Haven, a freshman handed the plate containing the remnants of his food to a New York multimillionaire, thinking him to be the butler. The great capitalist, leader of Newport society, instead of throwing the plate in the boy's face, took it without comment and carried it away.

On 6 March I had the pleasure of hearing a centenary performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, in Philadelphia, conducted by Leopold Stokowski, with the choral part sung by the Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto. The orchestra played magnificently; and the huge choir did that particular community singing better than I had ever heard it; but the solo parts were, as usual,

unimpressive. I do not believe that it is possible to sing those solos in a way to thrill or to transport the audience; yet Mr. Willem Mengelberg told me, in an interesting conversation I had with him the other day, that his soloists in Amsterdam can and do accomplish this feat. I have heard the Ninth Symphony in Paris, Munich, Philadelphia, and New York; the first three movements seem to me the height of the inspiration of genius; I get all kinds of spinal chills. But the vocal solos have given me invariably only one emotion, intense sympathy for the singers. They try so hard, and achieve so little. I am going to Amsterdam this autumn to see Mr. Mengelberg on his native heath; perhaps he can convince me.

On Saturday afternoon, 22 March, I heard and saw a beautiful performance of *Der Freischütz*, given in the Metropolitan Opera House, for the first time in many years. Exactly two decades ago I heard this charming opera in Munich; but the New York presentation was so much better vocally, dramatically, scenically, that there is simply no comparison. The spirit of old Germany—before the imperial abscess developed—is seen and felt better in *Die Meistersinger* and in *Der Freischütz* than in tons of histories, guide-books, and psychology tests. By the way—I wonder why the lovely French horn melody, played early in the overture and familiar to all churchgoers, has no echo in the opera. . . . Michel Bohnen as Caspar carried off the honours

of the occasion; he is a most valuable acquisition. I hope to live long enough to see him as Don Giovanni; but I shall have to wait until he has learned the Italian words. For Mr. Otto Kahn is right in insisting that all operas be sung in the original language of the libretto. The Metropolitan Opera House is the only place in the world where this is done; because it is the only place able to afford such luxuries.

Lawrence Gilman contrives to leaven his expositions on concert programmes with refreshing humour; but I do not suppose he intended the following concise statement of fact to suggest anything it does not explicitly say, yet:

ALEXANDER GLAZOUNOW
BORN AT PETROGRAD . . . STILL LIVING

It has been an unusually fine season in New York at the theatres; and as truly international as the Metropolitan Opera House. We have had French, German, Russian, Hungarian, British, Irish, Italian plays. Omitting Shakespeare and Rostand, the best play of the year is the English drama *Outward Bound.* The entire action is compressed within the limits of the smoking-room of a steamer; but life, death, the last judgment, heaven, hell, in fact the universe—all come into the scene.

One is reminded of old John Donne's verse:

And makes one little room an everywhere.

The plan of *Beggar on Horseback*, exquisitely produced by Winthrop Ames, is taken from a German play by Paul Apel, called *Hans Sonnenstösser's Höllenfahrt* (Hans Sun-bumper's Journey to Hell), which I saw in Munich in 1911. The American adaptation is better than the German original and much better presented; but, after all, the German author did create the idea. If it were not for this, I would vote for *Beggar on Horseback* as the best American play of the year. It is a delight to the eyes, and the satire on American life irresistibly funny.

On 28 October 1911 I heard the first Munich performance of the German original. The fall of the final curtain was greeted by terrific applause, terrific hissing and catcalls, and one man in the audience endeavoured to make a speech.

Edna Ferber, in her novel, *So Big*, has written something so big as to be altogether the best American novel of the season. It is in truth a splendid achievement, full of inspiration for the men and women strong enough to stand it, and a tragic warning to all who follow the line of least resistance. For when we last see the hero we appreciate the bitter irony of the title of the book. Was there ever a more striking instance of diminuendo?

Elinor Wylie, in *Jennifer Lorn*, has written a romance of the eighteenth century in a style so beautiful as to leave one all a-stare. Where did

she get the secret of this exquisite prose, with its subtle rhythm and cadence, its all but infallible choice of words? When Sinclair Lewis, "alone in London," read this new book, he became so excited that he cabled his joy to the New York *Herald*. And I don't blame him.

A novel by a new author is *You Too* by Roger Burlingame. It is an extremely good book, full of shrewd observation, and healthy to the core. I salute an original novelist.

XI

In thinking various thoughts aroused by that brilliant and stimulating book, *Reflections on the Napoleonic Legend*, by Professor Guérard, I find that I am forced to invent a word. I will now add to the English language the word *Soloism*. Of all the moderns, Napoleon was, perhaps, the greatest soloist. Soloists have always attracted attention, but in the twentieth century one of the signs of the times is the growth of soloism, which fact may partly account for the indestructible spell of Napoleon. The circle of his fame has been punctured by Guérard, but not deflated. Our age of machinery, so far from absorbing the individual into the mass, has brought personality more and more into the spot-light. Henry Ford is greater than any of his inventions, for every one of his vehicles advertises his name; the only reason why he is not a prominent—and perhaps successful—candidate for the Presidency of the United States is because he does not wish it. When the motion-pictures first began to amuse spectators, the names of the actors were not given; the sight of photographs of human beings in flexibility seemed sufficient to satisfy public curiosity. But now no individual receives more applause and money than the leading actors and actresses of the film. Charles Chaplin,

Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, Jackie Coogan, Lillian Gish, and many others are veritably "household words." By the assiduous advertising of the cinema star—that is by the straight appeal to the element of soloism—vast fortunes are made and the public driven into hysteria. When Mr. Chaplin arrived in England, the desire to behold him himself was so ungovernable that he was mobbed; thousands of women, it appeared, wished to kiss him. Mr. Hergesheimer informs me that Lillian Gish receives five hundred letters of love from male adorers every week. If it is announced that Jackie Coogan will reach a certain town by a certain train, there are hordes of men and women who, it seems, have nothing more important to do than to greet him.

In the game of baseball, one of the largest commercial enterprises in America, it used to be this or that particular nine that attracted the most attention, as it is a sport calling for team-play. But now it is the soloist who draws the crowd, fills the stands and the coffers of the owners. I do not know what salary Babe Ruth receives, but I think, in the present rage of soloism, he could easily earn two hundred thousand dollars a year. Half the crowd come not to see a game of ball, but to behold Babe Ruth. It is the soloist, and not the nine, that stirs the imagination. In football, the various lists of all-American teams are at once the result and cause of a fresh access of soloism.

We know what a ruinous effect soloism has upon the spoken drama; with the exception of plays written for soloists, by the greatest and the worst of dramatists, soloism ought to be out of place on the boards. It is the recognition of this fact that has made the Moscow Art Theatre the finest company of actors in the world; but in order to reveal their qualities, Chekhov and Gorki had to write plays in a technique new to the Western mind. It is a good sign that in the New York season just concluded, the most successful plays, *Outward Bound*, *The Show-Off*, *The Swan*, *The Potters*, *Beggar on Horseback*, minimised soloism; audiences are drawn in these cases not by any one name, but by a good play where every part is adequately acted.

The effect of soloism on symphony concerts is deplorable. I wish that symphony concerts could be given without any soloist, except when it is necessary to have a concerto. It seems to me absurd that between a symphony by Beethoven and a symphonic poem by Liszt, a fashionably dressed woman should appear and amuse the audience by trills and roulades. It is almost as bad as introducing professional acrobats. There should never be a vocal or instrumental solo at a symphony concert; instead of adding to the value of the performance, it is an interruption. Yet I am quite aware how necessary this soloism is, from the financial point of view. In my town of New Haven the announcement of the finest visiting orchestra in the world could

not fill our largest auditorium; no matter how superb the music or how superbly played, there would be many vacant rows of seats. But let some famous soprano be announced as soloist, even if she is to be on the stage only ten minutes, the house is jammed. In short, the audiences are attracted not by the desire to hear music, but to see a person who is in the public eye.

Napoleon, who understood everything in human nature except its spiritual side, determined to be the greatest soloist of all time, and succeeded. Even P. T. Barnum did not know the secret of advertising better than Bonaparte. It was always Napoleon, and not the army, that won the battles, which was precisely what Napoleon planned, and what the public wanted. One of the reasons the Trojan War did so much more for literature than the World War of 1914 was because it was a war of heroes, of soloists; the rank and file did not count. And one reason the World War has made so little appeal to the imagination is because it was not a war of individuals, but of the entire population of the countries concerned.

So far as I know, I am the first person to ask pointblank an explanation of the difference between the English grammar of Shakespeare's plays and that of the Authorised Version of the English Bible, published while Shakespeare was alive. Teachers tell school children and undergraduates that although Shakespeare's grammar

will not pass muster to-day, it was quite all right in his time. If this easy explanation is correct, why is it that the English prose of the Bible, as judged by the severest standards of 1924, is so near perfection that only two grammatical errors can be discovered? This question I put in a previous chapter. Professor Kittredge of Harvard tells me that my surmise—that there was a vernacular and a literary language in 1611—is substantially correct; and Professor Albert S. Cook of Yale writes me in detail a letter of such general interest that I am sure my readers will be glad to share some of its contents:

"To give a detailed and demonstrative opinion in reply to your query would of course demand a volume; and I cannot say that I have ever put the question to myself in so definite a form, though the problem is of the highest interest, as its treatment by a master would abundantly show. Here I can only improvise two or three suggestions, which you can readily elaborate and supplement for yourself. The first is that Shakespeare—whatever may be thought of Joseph Quincy Adams' insistence, in his new book, on the idea of the dramatist's probably having taught the elements of Latin when a young man—was not a man of thorough training in either language or literature, as indeed how could he be, seeing that he was married at the age of a normal Yale freshman, and had then no doubt been out of school for some years?

"In the second place, if we consider how much time and energy he must have devoted to his

profession of actor, he must have worked on the composition of his plays at top speed. If we call *The Tempest* his last drama, he must have written thirty-seven plays in twenty years, to say nothing of his other poems. Among the plays, some were revisions of work by earlier dramatists, so that part of the language of these plays was not even Shakespeare's at all.

"Thirdly, there is no evidence that Shakespeare laboured these productions with an eye to their admiration by posterity, as he may have done with his poems. If they served well a transient purpose, that was sufficient.

"But more important than these considerations is the fact that Shakespeare wrote primarily to be understanded of the people—not merely to be intellectually comprehended, but to appeal to their sense of humour, their affections, and on occasion their prejudices and passions. He was bound to be a popular dramatist, and, in being so, to run the whole gamut of human nature. He could, as we know, employ language of the greatest elevation and beauty, was familiar with all sorts of rhetorical devices, and was an adept in parodying current fashions of courtly compliment, but all this reposed on a colloquial and idiomatic basis. He gathered from books, but he built upon life. . . .

"If we turn to the Authorised Version, how different were all the processes involved in bringing its English to its present form! These I have tried to sketch in my chapter on the subject in the fourth volume of the Cambridge *History of English Literature*—also published separately as *The Authorized Version and Its Influence*. Assuming an acquaintance with this, it is only

necessary to reflect a moment in order to realise that every separate stage in the long history represents a work of scholarship and leisure. . . . Perfection was attained gradually. Nothing was left to chance. The delicate lacework of a Gothic window was nothing to it. Not one man wrought, but many; and time was no object. When practically the last word had been said, King James' revisers, forty-seven of them, worked steadily for two years and nine months. Compare that with the way in which certain of Shakespeare's plays must have been scrambled together, subject to abbreviations, extensions, and all sorts of changes afterwards.

"The history of the phrase, or rather sentence, which you adduce is rather instructive—I mean, 'Whom do men say that I am?' Of course the trouble rose out of the accusative with the infinitive, in both the Latin and the original Greek. With one exception, the Old English dodged the difficulty by translating (I modernise the forms), 'What say ye (men) that I be?' The exception is Matt. 16 : 13, 'Whom say men that man's Son be?' That, you see, is only one instance out of six. The two versions of Wyclif vary between accusative with infinitive (1) ('Whom say ye me to be?') (2) 'Whom say men that I am?' and (3) 'Who say ye that I am?' In both Luke 9 : 18 and 20, Tyndale has 'Who.' So there was always more or less consciousness of the difficulty, and efforts to meet it. Curiously enough, there is, besides, a grammatical error in Prov. 27: 3, the treating of *than* as if it were a preposition.

"In the same construction, Shakespeare will sometimes be wrong, and sometimes right: *cf.*

T. Sh. 4: 1: 11; *J. C.* 1: 3: 76; *A. & C.* 3: 3: 14. Another thing: not all that Abbott notes is unexampled, or even wrong, from our point of view. 'Region kites' sounds queer (*Haml.* 2: 2: 607); but so does 'quality trousers,' and *much* more offensive.

"'Nice customs curtsy to great kings,' and so they do to here and there a genius; but that is no reason why they should to inferior men.

"It would be fascinating to attempt really to do something with this topic; but how far it would lead one!"

Mrs. L. L. Braley, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, justly condemns me for singing the praises of golf and tennis, and making no reference to the joys of *walking*. I am the more inclined to take her castigation repentantly, because she informs me that she has not missed a single number of *Scribner's* since September 1922. She writes: "Having just swung in from a five-mile walk against this March wind, with the tingling sensation of every part of my body in action, having had the joy of a hot bath and a cold shower and a good rubdown, having dressed and settled down by my fire for my monthly pleasure in *As I Like It*, what do I read? A eulogy of golf and tennis and only scorn for walking—of all noble sports the noblest! A country road, a good companion swinging along beside me, the river of the deepest blue overflowing its banks, and March windclouds piled big against the blue, the smell of the earth filling our lungs to capacity—yet that is

not sport! The trouble is you don't know how to walk! . . . I shall have passed my sixtieth birthday before this reaches you, but come and let me teach you a new way to have 'fun,' and you will sweat too before I'm through with you."

Mea Culpa! I ought to have spoken of just that kind of walk, and I agree that it is great fun. Lest Mrs. Braley should think that I know nothing about it, let me inform her that when I was young, I walked from New Haven to the White Mountains, and there are not many sections of Connecticut over which I have not tramped. Paradoxically enough, good roads have had a disastrous effect on the pleasure of walking. That which is good for the automobile is not good for the feet; and motor-cars are a curse to the pedestrian. When I was an undergraduate, a classmate and I walked fifty miles in one day; but it would be difficult now to walk fifty miles in any direction without being killed. This letter, however, gives me the opportunity to recommend one of the best essays on the subject, *In Praise of Walking*, by Leslie Stephen.

The Literary Supplement of the London *Times* for 27 March winds up a rather effusive review of Mr. Gosse's latest book with this quotation, which in all seriousness is held up as a model both of criticism and of English style: "We must thank him for giving us the exact phrase for Trollope and his like—'he is never deliberate or exquisite; he is always pounding along at a sharp

prosaic trot, like a man who is walking to his office in the morning.'" Marry, he trots hard. Perhaps he walks with one foot and trots with the other.

The month of May will be brightened in Europe by two great celebrations, one in Paris, the other in Vienna, both of which will belong to history by the time these words appear in print. Chancellor Dawson of the University of Mississippi, author of the standard work on Henry Becque, reminds me that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Becque will be commemorated in Paris by marking with tablets the houses where he was born and where he died, one of the theatres will produce all his plays in a single week, and his nephew will publish his hitherto unprinted manuscripts. In Vienna, the sixtieth birthday of Richard Strauss will be celebrated by fifteen days and nights of performances of his operas, orchestral compositions, and songs; and he will be made an honorary member of everything worth joining. The dead and the quick will thus be paid homage, as is fitting. Genius is the rarest article in the world except radium; only once have the two united, as in the case of Madame Curie.

Several members have retroactively joined the Asolo Club. Miss Annie B. Jennings of Fairfield, Connecticut, sends me the indubitable proof of her visit; also Miss C. Matthews of

Vevey, Switzerland; in 1900 Miss Julia E. Schelling of Philadelphia, Mrs. Charles S. Prest of Brooklyn, Miss Alice Clarke, Miss Lena E. Doyle, and Miss Sarah L. Doyle of Cohoes, visited Asolo and bought doilies at the Browning lace school; while the poet, Robert Underwood Johnson, recently ambassador to Italy, has an abundant entrance along with two others. He writes: "Am I not eligible for the Asolo Club? Reread my little chapter on that delectable town in the *Memoirs*, and then reperuse my *Browning at Asolo* in the *Collected Poems* of Yours Truly. Haven't I given my heart away in each? And didn't I fairly tremble during the war as the (somewhat too) late Enemy approached that beauteous town? Who else has celebrated its charm and quality in verse? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Presuming that I am admitted as a charter member, I nominate Charles deKay, Mrs. Brondai's brother, who wrote about Asolo in the old *Century*, and Miss Clara Montalba of Venice, who made sketches for the article. . . . The Contessa Rucellai (Edith Bronson) must be one of us, or rather we must be one of her, as she owned the little house on the wall 'La Mura.' . . . Read also my reference to Asolo in *A Vision of Italy* in my poems." Johnson gets in with both feet, pedal and metrical. The Contessa Rucellai, by the way, is the daughter of Katharine (Mrs. Arthur) Bronson, the cultivated and charming American woman to whom Browning dedicated his last volume of

poems, and who subsequently contributed articles to the *Century* (see especially February 1902) that gave new and valuable information concerning the ever-living poet. There are some strange-minded individuals who do not like Browning, but one regards them as Mr. Samuel Gompers says he regards all labourers who are not union men—"with extreme commiseration."

It is pleasant to observe that Johnson's autobiography, *Remembered Yesterdays*, is having such wide circulation. It is a contribution to the literary history of the last fifty years. If he trembled at the approach of the Germans toward Asolo, I felt actual terror when I read in the newspaper one morning that the Austrians were dropping bombs on Ancona. A Roman arch is there in perfect preservation, built by Trajan, A. D. 113. Eighteen hundred years after its completion I walked under it, and reflected on the thoroughness of the Romans. They would spend a week-end in some pleasant town, and put up a memorial of their visit to last two thousand years.

Mrs. Elizabeth Zeilitz Shapleigh of Williamsville, New York, assuredly has the courage of her convictions, for she nominates for the Ignoble Prize the poetry of Horace! "I read it in my youth in the original. . . . I have since read Louis Untermeyer's really admirable English rendering, and still I completely abominate it. Most other Latin poetry I class with it, excepting

Catullus and Lucretius, who alone of the lot seem to me to be sincere. I am quite certain that Horace never so far forgot himself as really to care two denarii about any of the lady-loves concerning whom he wrote so gracefully." Well, Horace lacked the passion of Catullus and the majesty of Lucretius, but in some other qualities he was supreme. I remember when we were freshmen, Mr. Ambrose Tighe, now a lawyer in St. Paul, and then our most brilliant instructor in Latin, told us that Lucretius was so great a writer that in comparison with him the entire works of Ovid and Virgil sank into insignificance. Was there ever in all history a man who combined to so high a degree science and art, cerebration and sublimity? It is exactly as though Darwin had written *The Origin of Species* in the style of *Paradise Lost.*

Now just after reading the nomination of Horace for the Ignoble Prize, and commending the proposer for her courage, however far I may be from sharing her view, I happened to open a new book by John Jay Chapman, called *Letters and Religion,* and on the first page I find the following:

"The Greek and Latin classics will never be forgotten. . . . It is easier to imagine a substitute for telegraphy than a substitute for Horace's *Odes;* for the contrivances that harness electrical power change rapidly—a new one replaces an old. But the vehicles which carry spiritual power around the world are so subtle

and complex, so much a part of the human mind's own history, that they speak to every generation in its home tongue, and live down a hundred theories of scientific truth and ten thousand contrivances of material convenience.

"I cite Horace as a symbol, and because he represents, not religion, nor the higher kinds of poetry, nor anything which appeals to a special passion in the reader, but because he is in himself a microcosm of social wisdom more universal than anything which philosophy, poetry, or religion has let loose on mankind. He has a noble and religious attitude toward life, but expresses it not in abstractions, nor in those intense forms of feeling which appeal to highly emotional people, but in glints and glimmers which ordinary, worldly, benevolent citizens understand very well; and whatever else the future world may hold, it is certain to be full of ordinary, worldly, benevolent people. Such among them as have good wits are sure to read Horace.

"Horace seems tc represent an eternal type of gentleman who reappears periodically, whether under tyrannies, democracies, or socialisms; whether in slavery or at liberty; whether in Australia or South America. Such men will always crop up wherever anything arises that can be called a civilisation. One reason for their resurgence is that human civilisation is a continuous stream and passes on with the race. The seeds of letters are handed on like the seeds of domestic vegetables. Men will sooner find a substitute for potatoes than for Horace's *Odes*. . . . We have thus found out that Horace is an exceedingly rare man. He is unique.

"The power to enjoy life is at the bottom of Horace's popularity. It was a renewed power to enjoy life that revealed the Greek and Roman classics to the enthusiasts of the Renaissance."

I have quoted the above passage at length, because it states the case with precision; but it is only an illustrative remark in a little book filled with stimulating ideas. I feel confidence in recommending to my readers Mr. Chapman's *Letters and Religion.* If you care for either literature or religion, you will read this small volume with such enthusiasm that you will feel personally grateful to the author for writing it. It is the expression of a full mind, of a man who has somehow managed to read widely and to think deeply; the range of his culture has not deprived him of the power of productive meditation. Schopenhauer warned us of the danger of indiscriminate reading; the danger is that we shall let others do our thinking for us, instead of taking over ourselves that difficult and often painful job. Mr. Chapman uses his reading to tip and wing the arrows of his thought; and I do not suppose there has ever been a time when this particular book was needed more than now.

A gentleman from North Carolina emphatically nominates for the Ignoble Prize "all yells of all colleges, prep schools, high schools, or correspondence schools." I wonder if he would also include the following. One day a "stranger in

our midst" observed a group of boys and girls standing on a street corner, making queer motions with their fingers. Upon inquiry he ascertained that they belonged to a deaf-and-dumb asylum, and were giving the school yell.

Shakespeare left us thirty-seven plays. Of these, I have seen on the stage twenty-eight. It is my hope to see them all before I die. Those that I have not yet beheld are *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Parts of King Henry IV*, *Richard II*, *Coriolanus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and if any one knows where I can see any of these, I shall be obliged for advance information. *Pericles*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*, I saw first in Germany; *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Comedy of Errors*, with Robson and Crane; *King John*, with Robert Mantell; *The First Part of King Henry IV*, with Yale undergraduates; the *Second Part*, with Harvard undergraduates; *King Henry VIII*, with Beerbohm Tree; *Cymbeline*, with Margaret Mather; and I have recently seen *Titus Andronicus*, presented for the first time in the Western hemisphere by undergraduate members of Alpha Delta Phi, at Yale, under the direction of Professor John Berdan and Edgar Montillion Woolley. It was a glorious bloody melodrama, and held the audience from beginning to end. When I was twelve years old, *Titus Andronicus* was my favourite play. I thought it superior to *Hamlet*, because

it was so full of action. It is indeed a remarkable specimen of the Tragedy of Blood, and helped to establish the Romantic Drama on the Elizabethan stage. To the consternation of Ben Jonson, it retained its popularity all through the period from 1585 to 1616, for in his induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, he scornfully remarked: "He that will swear *Ieronimo* or *Andronicus* are the best plays yet, shall pass unexcepted at here as a man whose judgment shows it is constant, and hath stood still these five and twenty or thirty years."

An important, valuable, and scrupulously scholarly work has just been produced by Doctor E. K. Chambers of London, called *The Elizabethan Stage*. It is in four volumes, contains about two thousand pages in fine but readable print, has prodigious bibliographies, and four indexes, by means of which the reader can look up any part or aspect of the whole period. I salute this book with reverence, because it is a monument of learning. Practically all we know of the Elizabethan theatres, and of the theatrical, social, and financial conditions in which Shakespeare lived and wrote, can be found here. Furthermore, although nearly every sentence has a foot-note hitched to it, the text is decidedly interesting, often sharpened with salty humour. Doctor Chambers seems to combine German industry with English discrimination; he takes his place as the first of living scholars on the Elizabethan stage; it is difficult to see how his work

can ever be superseded. There is something almost sensational about a publication of this kind, which, the result of twenty years of daily and nightly research, is instantly recognised as standard, and moves automatically to its place at the head of all authorities.

The centenary of the death of Byron has been fittingly and permanently commemorated by a valuable work of some four hundred pages, called *Byron in England: His Fame and After-Fame*, by Professor Samuel C. Chew, one of the best literary scholars in America. Mr. Chew is well equipped by learning, possesses the gift of style, and knows how to make his subject interesting to the general reader. (His little book on Thomas Hardy is the best I have seen.) *Byron in England* makes a distinct contribution to our knowledge of the poet and to our pleasure. Mr. Chew is a scholar and a critic who loves literature because he loves life; it is his sympathy with life that helps to make him so excellent an interpreter of poetry.

Synchronously with this book on Byron comes out of Cambridge University a large and attractive work on Byron's contemporary. This is called *Shelley and the Unromantics*, by Olwen Ward Campbell, and presents some original points of view. To lovers of literature, there is perhaps no more interesting reading than a critical biography.

As most doctors' theses are the last of all

things to be recommended to the general reader, let me call attention to one brilliant exception. This is *Le Roman et Les Idées en Angleterre*, 1860–1890, presented to the faculty of letters at the University of Strasbourg by Madeleine L. Camazian. Among novelists that receive special treatment are George Eliot, Samuel Butler, George Gissing, and Thomas Hardy. It is particularly interesting to get a foreign estimate of the work of these English writers. Speaking of Gissing, I believe that his book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, will outlast his novels, and if there are any readers of these lines who have not seen it, let me insist that a copy be secured with all reasonable speed. It is a *quiet* book, full of healing.

I welcome to the ranks of literary critics the young author Arnold Whitridge, whose *Critical Ventures in Modern French Literature* is filled with good conversation. It has a disarmingly modest preface. Mr. Whitridge is a grandson of Matthew Arnold, and seems destined to maintain the family tradition.

Make way for the younger generation! I have just read a novel by a Harvard undergraduate, James Gould Cozzens, called *Confusion*. It is an excellent story, and perhaps its chief triumph consists in this: the heroine is an absolute paragon, physically and intellectually, and yet is real.

The best among the fresh welter of college novels is *The Education of Peter*, by John Wiley.

It is good for what it leaves out. It describes in a studiously simple way four years at an American college, as they were experienced by a shy, self-conscious lad, who was neither a social nor an athletic hero, but who is quite recognisable. If college life were what it is represented to be in some other novels, all colleges should be abolished. But it isn't. I have never read an entirely satisfactory story of college, and only one of school life, *Tom Brown's School Days*, which owed its origin to an accident. And I expect at any moment to take up some modern magazine and find an article that proves to the satisfaction of its author that *Tom Brown* is in reality rubbish, because it has the unpardonable fault of being decent.

Archibald Marshall's novel, *Anthony Dare*, is one of the most audacious of recent books; and I mean by the adjective exactly the opposite of its conventional connotation. It is audacious, because in a time when things that ought to be unprintable are constantly printed, and attention is sought by abnormalities and freakish adventures, Mr. Marshall has the courage almost to caricature his own method. In his previous novels—of which the best are those incomparable four dealing with the Clinton family—he relied for his success on the presentation of natural people in natural surroundings; so that the interest of the reader was held by the reality of the characters. Those books represented England

before the war; and now, when many novelists seem engaged in a competition for the Shock Prize, Mr. Marshall calmly writes a novel where, in the ordinary sense of the word, nothing happens, and yet where the boy-hero develops and the story unfolds as naturally as life itself. It is a fine spectacle to see so resolute an artist; to see a writer, who, having made up his mind, continues his work in a tranquillity not once ruffled by his disreputable neighbours. He has followed up *Anthony Dare* by a second novel, *The Education of Anthony Dare;* this will be succeeded by a third, fourth, and probably fifth book dealing with the same person. The charm of this method lies partly in the fact that the reader has the certainty of becoming intimately acquainted with Anthony Dare and his associates; we not only read about them, we live with them. This seems to me more rewarding than to follow some trivial cad through scenes of debauchery; and it is pleasant to observe that Mr. Marshall, without making any compromises, has finally won his public on both sides of the ocean. America surrendered to the Clinton twins long before England would even acknowledge an acquaintance. To-day the tone of British criticism shows that Mr. Marshall has won his place among the novelists.

That skilful diagnostician, Gamaliel Bradford, has done another fine piece of work in *The Soul of Samuel Pepys,* an analysis of the public and private life of the greatest of all diarists. I

heartily recommend this book to every reader who is interested in one who was the most natural and the most enigmatic person of his time. Please pronounce the name *Peeps*.

Let me also praise *Men of Letters*, by Dixon Scott, who lost his life in the World War. It is impossible to read such critical work as this without the conviction that Dixon Scott would have developed into one of the foremost writers of our time. These essays are full of insight and sparkle with wit. Best of all, they are enthusiastic; they show that love of excellence which is the foundation of criticism. His heroes are not targets, because they really are heroes. These titles should invite you: *The Ambitions of Sir James Barrie, Bart.*, *The Guilt of Mr. Chesterton*, *The Innocence of Bernard Shaw*, *The Meekness of Mr. Rudyard Kipling*, *The Artlessness of Mr. H. G. Wells*, *The Homeliness of Browning*. Such labels are good, and the articles are better.

Another admirable book of English essays is *Gossip of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, by John Beresford. The account of the execution of King Charles I is thrilling. I have been informed that in Philadelphia there exists to-day a church called the Church of Charles the Martyr. Is it so? I was brought up in the good old Puritan way, to believe that Oliver was a saint, and the Stuarts sons of Belial; I was therefore later rather surprised to find so many godly men of the seventeenth century on the King's side. Owen Felltham called Charles Christ the Second.

I counsel readers of contemporary fiction to watch Arthur Mason, who is one of the most original ocean-going novelists of our day. He has lived through astounding experiences, and happens to possess both experience and art. Most men who have seen what he has seen are not articulate; but he, like John Masefield, knows how to spend what he has earned. His latest book, *The Cook and the Captain Bold,* is a rattling good yarn told by one who knows not only What but How.

The Faerie Queene Club has been enriched by two additions. Mrs. Florence Wyman Jaques writes from Italy: "While young and determined to read, for a first time at least, the entire work of each great master and the only purchasable edition of Spenser bound in a heavy volume with Chaucer, I did begin with the *Faerie Queene* and finished it. . . . I read in golden autumnal weeks, nestled in the roots of a giant sugar maple, and with a basket of Catawba grapes at hand. Since then I have read many times the lovely shorter poems of Spenser, and have never failed any spring to dip deep into Chaucer, none of whose poems fail to delight me . . . and all more or less at different seasons of a long life. But never, book in hand, came the impulse to attack again the *Faerie Queene.* Shall I be blackballed? If not, I promise to give myself another try at it, next summer, up in the Sabine Hills. Awaiting decision." You are admitted *cum laude.*

Walter Robert Snow, of Willimantic, Connecticut, writes: "Keats first led me to Spenser, but I read his minor poems long before reading his epic through. I read it through in about two weeks in my spare time last November. Then it was my custom to get up about four or five o'clock in the morning and read or write, because at that hour all was still. . . . I call your attention to the fact that there is really no good edition of Spenser available. . . . Any one-volume edition must necessarily be in very fine type, which makes it impossible for people with weak eyes to read it, and which even repels people with good eyesight. A three-volume edition in 12mo, with neither extra thin nor extra thick pages, would be an ideal edition of 'the poet's poet,' as Lamb called him."

I have Grosart's magnificent edition in nine volumes, but that is limited to one hundred and fifty copies, and I bought it at auction. I also bought at auction a five-volume edition in large type, edited by Gilfillan, which came from the library of John B. Gough, the temperance lecturer. There is, however, a satisfactory and cheap edition in six handy volumes, but it is meant for schools and colleges. There ought to be a handsome library modern edition. If the Faerie Queene Club should lead some publisher into this enterprise, it would add to our pride.

I promised to say nothing more about cats, and I keep my word. But others may talk and

contribute. Every day brings me a cat letter. I know my readers will share my delight in the following epistle from the distinguished dramatist and actor, William Gillette.

"I hope you have not yet written the further article about cats for 'As I Like It' which you promised us, as this letter may encourage you to do better.

"I do not myself see how you can, but I read that perfection is never attained, and therefore must conclude that any item which assists one toward it is desirable. Encouragement is doubtless in the list of such items, especially when we take into consideration the violent attacks made upon any one who speaks a few words of appreciation for the marvellous feline contingent. I am quite certain you have been mercilessly set upon.

"But surely it must be evident to you that those who attack a person for appreciating the wonderful traits and beauties of cats are grossly and absolutely ignorant, and also pitiably prejudiced regarding them, and in addition are the resident members of a class which prefers abject unreasoning worship and cloying servility to unconquerable independence and rare judgment of character.

"And surely you know what good company you are in—and I am not referring to myself alone in reminding you of this—in the appreciation of cats. Even old Voltaire took the trouble to say 'Beware of the woman who does not like cats'—and although I have sometimes failed to

beware of her, I nevertheless enjoy having that testimony to Mr. V's attitude on the question.

"What I really wanted to say was not the foregoing (which is really foregone, as there can be no argument about it)—but the following:

"There are three things which I really think you would do well to touch upon when you next take up this subject:

"1. The absolute necessity of cats for the preservation of birds. There is unlimited testimony from scientific sources that, for the few birds that are caught and devoured by cats, there are millions whose lives are saved by the destruction of their enemies.

"2. The unquestionable possession of some sort of extra 'sense' which enables cats to be aware of the attitude—or even more than the attitude, of a human mind, where it concerns themselves. I have experimented a great deal in this direction, and cannot avoid the conclusion that cats are either real mind readers (when they want to be), or that they have such a wonderful appreciation of exterior symptoms that they arrive at the mental processes via that route.

"3. I have forgotten this one for the moment; but I want to tell you this: it was very important and it would be a good thing for you to consult me before you do anything further on this subject—and also possibly (for all I know) on any other.

"P. S.—Although I have taken considerable time in trying to remember what the third point was, it has not yet occurred to me. For a substitute, however, let us say that it was the ex-

quisite sense of comedy possessed by the family under discussion—comedy of the very highest known altitude. Though I have not considered the matter, it seems to me that no other animal is possessed of such an exquisite and fastidious sense of humour—not even man himself. That is all for the present."

Now if William Gillette will add to this service a revival of *The Admirable Crichton*, he will receive a special halo, made to order.

Ever since reading Stewart's splendid novel, *Valley Waters*, I have longed to visit Zanesville, Ohio, and see with my own eyes the scenes made famous by that book. This ambition has been realised. On Saturday 28 April, accompanied by my most intimate friend, and by the high-hearted Charles and Betty Abernethy of Pittsburgh, I stood on the Y bridge and heard the mighty waters rolling evermore. Every one who reads this novel must see this town. I paused and addressed a select audience in Wheeling, at the tip of the cat's tail in West Virginia; and I discovered that Wheeling is filled with readers of *Scribner's;* also that Woodsfield is the scene of the activities of three Mooney brothers, all devoted sons of Yale, who graciously entertained us overnight. One of them took me to the top of a high mountain and showed me the kingdom of Ohio and the glory thereof.

Reading *Valley Waters* added *materially* to my

life. In *Scribner's* for April 1923, I compared the book to a Hood River apple. This comparison awakened the ire of John M. Hopkins of Virginia, who sent me a box of Virginia winesaps, to prove that Virginia had just as good apples as Oregon. Then I merely happened to remark that I had been eating York ham, and I wondered if there were ever in the world ham of equal merit. The patriotic Hopkins immediately sent me an enormous Virginia ham, which I confess is at least ten times better than York. I had not imagined there could be such ham—such ham is not poetry, it is religion. Burton Rascoe, the young literary critic of the New York *Herald-Tribune*, suggested in his interesting columns that if I got the ham, I should next try for a Rolls-Royce. No, I will not do this. I am absolutely satisfied with my Ford sedan—I am certain there is no other style of car that can possibly compare with it.

XII

Not so very long ago, it seemed that the contribution of American women to the Novel was chiefly financial; by reading and talking about works of fiction, but principally by buying them, they kept novelists from starvation. And in truth women were and are, just as necessary to the Novel as to foreign missions, symphony concerts, art galleries, literary lectures, and other good things.

A list of leading story-writers drawn up in any decade of the nineteenth century would have shown an overwhelming preponderance of men. How about such a list to-day? What group of men have produced within the last few months novels equal in merit to: *So Big*, by Edna Ferber; the four books of old New York by Edith Wharton; *The Home-maker*, by Dorothy Canfield; *The Little French Girl*, by Anne Sedgwick; *Faint Perfume*, by Zona Gale; *The Lost Lady*, by Willa Cather; *Lummox*, by Fannie Hurst; *Jennifer Lorn*, by Elinor Wylie? When the house of Harpers recently offered a prize for the best novel, it was awarded to Margaret Wilson for *The Able McLaughlins*. In every sense of the word, women are looking up.

Poetical and musical compositions show perhaps more creative power than prose fiction. Some day the world may see a first-class woman poet and a first-class woman composer. There

are, of course, many who regard Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti as in the front rank of poets; but there are more who do not. Nowhere and at no time on the earth has there appeared a woman among the great makers of music. This is at first sight all the more remarkable because it is probable that there are a hundred women to one man who understand and appreciate the best music. The fact is, however, that poetry and music are preeminently the manly arts; there are more first-class woman athletes than first-class woman poets and composers. Must this always be so? The late Professor George Trumbull Ladd, an authority on philosophy and psychology, wrote an article in the *Yale Review* in which he attempted to prove that women *cannot* write the best music. He did not have to prove that they had not.

Those who still believe that "woman's place is in the home" ought to read Dorothy Canfield's novel, *The Home-maker*. And those who do not believe it ought also to read the same book. It is the best story she has written since *The Bent Twig*. The idea and the characters are original; and it is quite free from the verbosity that seriously injured *The Brimming Cup* and *Rough-Hewn*. It is a novel of an interior, a household and family composed of father, mother, and three children. While each one of the children is cleverly individualised, the main interest for the reader lies in the father and mother—two living persons who at a certain point in the nar-

rative exchange occupations to the enormous advantage of both, and particularly to the advantage of the three children, who, like all children, are in the power of older but not necessarily wiser beings. For there are many parents not intentionally cruel or indifferent, who take more care of so elementary a mechanism as a Ford car, than they do of the delicate and complex souls of their offspring. One reason, among others, for my admiration of Dorothy Canfield is that the artistic structure of her work rests upon spiritual foundations. It is her recognition of the forces that make human life significant that gives to her productions an importance that can never be found in any mere record of imagined adventures or in any copy, no matter how accurate, of trivial events.

Perhaps emboldened by the success of *The Age of Innocence*, which dealt with New York society in the 'seventies, and which is the best of her works, Edith Wharton has launched four new novels simultaneously: *False Dawn*, *The Old Maid*, *The Spark*, *New Year's Day*. They deal externally with New York in the 'forties, the 'fifties, the 'sixties, the 'seventies; but their real and common subject is the human heart, which remains the same in every age. I like the first and the third in this series better than the other two; but as Americans, we do well to be proud of all four of them. These books bring glory to America, and while we are materially the most enviable nation on earth, I feel somehow that

we are a little short on glory. I can only imagine what foreigners must be saying of our political wisdom by knowing what we say of it ourselves. "*Art still has truth, take refuge there!*"

The human heart remains the same in every age; hence, if the Utopia of Mr. H. G. Wells, as cleverly and even brilliantly set forth in *The Dream*, should ever become a reality, it will materialise on some other planet. His imagined people seem to enjoy themselves and seem free from the disasters and tortures of this present time; my only criticism of them is that although they are attractive, they are not human.

Just now there is much interest in the recreation of the fashions and manners of former generations. Mr. Rupert Hughes, whom I admire more than some of his critics (ambiguity intentional) in his novel *Within These Walls* made a vivid, though somewhat lurid picture of New York in the 'forties. It is really an epic not written in, but of, Water. And Meade Minnigerode, who has an especial talent for the gossipy side of history, has produced this year a book, *The Fabulous Forties*, which I find full of fascination; also full of material for thought.

Two excellent mystery stories have recently appeared, which I recommend to my readers: *Who Killed Cock Robin?* by Harrington Hext, and *The Great House in the Park*, by Anon. Harrington Hext is a famous novelist, and the publishers ought to offer a prize to all those who

can guess his identity, for no one could guess the outcome of the story, which is as puzzling and baffling as *The Grey Room*. I will not attempt it, because I know.

On Friday, 23 May, I had the pleasure of seeing Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* presented by an extraordinary cast, including Clare Eames, Dudley Digges, Margalo Gillmore, Roland Young, and Fritz Leiber. The play was produced by Robert Edmond Jones, and directed by the Equity Players. It is an interesting fact that the revival of an American or English piece which may have scored heavily some ten years ago usually fails to arouse those who hear it for the first time and to rearouse those who can remember their earlier enthusiasm; whereas *Hedda Gabler* (1890) held the audiences of 1924 so strongly that it was necessary to extend the number of performances. The simplest explanation is that Ibsen was a man of genius, whereas—but there are other reasons. *Hedda Gabler* makes no appeal to time or place, but deals with fundamental and eternal elements in human nature; hence, when intelligently acted must impress intelligent people. I could not help thinking, between the acts, that although we now have a considerable number of excellent contemporary English and American plays, they seem slight in comparison with this work by Ibsen. It is a drama entirely made up of conversation—but how magnificent the economy of its construction! How definitely every sentence contributes to the movement toward

the catastrophe! Strange that so many used to believe that Ibsen was primarily a dramatist to be read rather than to be acted; when the average experience with *Hedda Gabler* is bewilderment in reading it, and clarity in seeing it.

Despite the excellence and intelligence of Miss Eames's interpretation, it was not equal to that displayed some years ago by Madame Nazimova, and indeed could not be. Mr. Archer believes that Hedda resembles the normal society woman; yet I think it is the taint of abnormality that gives her such horrible fascination.

The publication of Otis Skinner's autobiography, *Footlights and Spotlights*, reminds me of the time when I first saw him on the stage. It was in Hartford, a place more fitting than I then knew, for Mr. Skinner is a graduate of the Hartford Public High School. The play was *Macbeth*, and the bills announced Edwin Booth and Madame Modjeska. Booth was plainly tired, and only occasionally exhibited a flash of his genius; Madame Modjeska gave a capable, but uninspiring interpretation of the Lady. The success of the evening was won by Macduff, played by a promising young actor named Otis Skinner. Although I have enjoyed his fine art many times since that memorable occasion, I never enjoyed it more than in October 1900, when I saw him, Eleanor Robson, and Mrs. Sarah Cowell Lemoyne play in Browning's *In a Balcony*, which was so successful that the company went on tour

for a year. The excitement in the theatre on that October day was so great that William Winter never forgave Robert Browning, the actors, or the audience.

What right has a play to be successful when according to all the canons of dramatic art, it isn't?

I shall be glad to hear from any one who will take the trouble to read *In a Balcony*, and then see the motion picture called *The Eagle's Feather*.

The death of Victor Herbert removed the foremost composer of light opera in America. Yet although the papers properly devoted much space to this event, and printed many lists of his compositions, I saw no mention of his masterpiece, *The Serenade*. Yet who, among those who heard it, can forget its lovely melodies, the splendid singing of Eugene Cowles, and the glorious humour of dear old Barnabee?

Mr. E. Byron Hostetter writes enthusiastically that he has just witnessed in Dallas, Texas, on the stage of the Dallas Little Theatre the first night of *Judge Lynch*, with which the Dallas Little Theatre won the David Belasco Cup in the National Little Theatre tournament held in New York in May. The successful playwright is J. W. Rogers, Jr., and the interest in the performance was so great that hundreds of applications for seats had to be refused. Mrs. R. E. L. Knight, Jr., the wife of a Harvard graduate, is

the prime mover of the Little Theatre in Dallas, and has justly earned the gratitude of all the people in the city who are interested in the various things that appeal to the mind.

I learn from that admirable weekly periodical called *Time* that the *Etude*, a Philadelphia magazine, assembled a court composed of twenty-five professional musicians and one novelist, to decide on the greatest composers of all time and their masterpieces. The only composition that obtained a majority of votes was *Die Meistersinger*, which certainly deserved it; the four immediately following were Bach's Mass in B Minor, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The first six composers came in this order: Beethoven, Wagner, Bach, Mozart, Brahms, Schubert. This vote interested me, for I have always maintained it would be easy to agree on the first four, but that the fifth man would be a matter of dispute. On the façade of the Music Hall in Chicago appear the names which those who placed them there regarded as the leading five: the fifth is Schubert; in the *Etude* court, he is sixth. But there is no one who can oust any one of the big four.

The vexed question as to whether or not *Uncle Tom's Cabin* deserves high rating in the world's literary masterpieces makes Macaulay's memorandum, as cited in the Boston *Transcript*,

interesting: "I finished *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (October 4, 1852); a powerful and disagreeable book; too dark and Spagnoletto-like for my taste, when considered as a work of art. But on the whole it is the most valuable addition that America has made to English literature."

Recent acquisitions to the membership list of the Asolo Club are Miss Letitia Simons, of Port Chester, New York, Mrs. A. D. Wasson and Miss Elizabeth Wasson, of Buffalo, who happened to witness the funeral of Eleanora Duse, who was buried there in May. Her grave forms an additional reason for making a pilgrimage to the charming little town.

The dinner of the Fano Club was held in New Haven on 7 May; ten were present, letters and telegrams were received from San Francisco and other places. The most original contribution to the gathering was sent by Dean J. H. Wigmore, of Northwestern University, who wrote an exceedingly clever parody on the first stanza of the first canto of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Here is the original:

E invan l'Inferno vi si oppose, e invano
S'armò d'Asia e di Libia il popol' misto;
Il Ciel gli diè favore; e sotto ai santi
Segni ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.

Here is Dean Wigmore's poem:

E in Fan' il maestro pose il Circol' Fano,
Che tien' del Mondo Nuovo un' popol' misto:

E il Ciel gli diè favore, e sotto ai santi
Olmi ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.

William Morrell, special agent of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in Pittsburgh, tells me of another literary bookshop which should be added to my list. This is John H. Bruder's Book Mart at 521½ Pine Street, St. Louis. It is "located in a cramped, ground-floor hall of a walk-up house. There, buried in stacks of dusty old books and hovered over a reeking oil stove, you will find the proprietor . . . poring over a pamphlet which catalogues the wants of book-lovers from all over the United States. And it will surprise you how many of these wants he will be able to supply."

I quote from two letters I have received on the *Five Pounds of Cinnamon* question, and now, by the help of four correspondents, my curiosity is satisfied, my memory of a book read in childhood corrected and enriched, and the matter definitely settled. Miss Elsie Maynard of Freeport, Illinois: "On the title page is *Five Pounds and Other Stories*. By Ellis Toune, Sophie May, and Ella Farman. D. Lothrop and Company, Publishers." Miss Charlotte Eddy, of Perrysville, Ohio: "I have a book, treasured from childhood, called *Happy Hours for Girls*. D. Lothrop and Company, which contains *Five Pounds of Cinnamon*. The exact quotation alluded to in the January *Scribner's* is: 'Her mouth was tingling pungently with the fine cinnamon and in her

pocket yet were eight moist, fat, sugary raisins, to be slipped in her mouth one by one, four during the geography lesson, four during the spelling lesson.'" Eight, not four! Both of these correspondents refer to *Wide Awake,* where the story seems first to have appeared. I well remember that magazine, for I was a subscriber.

Although I am almost immune from shock, I confess that I was slightly seismised by receiving almost at the same moment from two persons a nomination for the Ignoble Prize of one of the world's favourite novels—*The Three Musketeers.* The two men who have the temerity to suggest this are Mr. William A. Watts and Professor Wilmot H. Sheldon. The latter also informs me that William James stated in one of his books that he attempted to read *The Three Musketeers* while seasick, and obtained an incurable dislike of the book. Now what is the good of being a psychologist if you allow seasickness to triumph over so marvellous a work of genius? If there are any others in the world who do not like *The Three Musketeers,* let me recommend that they reread Stevenson's essay *A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's,* which contains an appraisement of the character of D'Artagnan. In the *Vicomte de Bragelonne,* Athos becomes an insufferable prig, and Aramis is a sad spectacle; but Porthos and D'Artagnan run true to form.

The town of Logansport, Indiana, will always be bright in my memory, for upon a certain occa-

sion I had to remain in that place three hours to wait for a train. I went to a hotel, sat down in front of an open fire, drew from my pocket *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and passed a supremely happy afternoon.

I nominate for the Ignoble Prize all cigar bands. What an accursed nuisance they are! of value only to children who collect them. To smoke the cigar with the gay surcingle upon it, is the last word in vulgarity; to tear it off with your fingernails requires at least thirty-eight separate attempts, resulting in thirty-eight scraps of paper; the tenacity of the sash is amazing. To slit it with a knife, if you have one, is almost always to break the skin of the cigar, which hurts both its appearance and its drawing power, and results anyhow in a certain amount of proud flesh that has subsequently to be removed even more carefully. Mark Twain, to show his indifference to these gauds, said that he bought his cigars by the barrel; "some had bellybands, and some had not."

Why must cigars have these superfluous embellishments? Is it because so many people love splendour more than comfort? Or does it come from the same human weakness that makes men love to wear labels and badges?

Another of my candidates for the Ignoble Prize is the Light Billiard Cue. Although nearly every player selects a cue of eighteen ounces or more, fully half and usually more of the cues in any billiard-rack are under eighteen ounces in

weight, and are therefore never used. And if one buys a private set for the house, light cues predominate.

I nominate for the Ignoble Prize most of the published poetry by children. Such publications are bad for literature, bad for the author, and bad for the character and temper of critics. I do not refer to humorous verse, which may display a charming naïveté, or a real sense of fun, or may be so crude as to be amusing. I am talking about the numerous volumes of "poetry" written by children, and which are gravely presented to the public as authentic literature.

I am hoping that I shall be able to discover a new novel where the young heroine's figure is not described as "boyish," and where she does not say "Damn" within the first ten pages. A change in speech-fashions is proved by the fact that twenty years ago, when a playwright wished to "get a laugh," he required one of the men on the stage to say "Damn"; now for the same effect it is necessary that the monosyllable be uttered by a woman. Why, to the *eye*, is the final "n" so weighty? Many novelists believe that an apostrophe robs the word of its sting, thus: "He is a dam' fine fellow." They also cherish the belief that "Damn it!" loses any possible tinge of vulgarity if spelled "dammit!" Perhaps they are right; but if so, why?

I am pleased to see that *The Catholic World* not only believes in saying "I" when one means

"I," but that it took this position in print in September 1923, before I published in this department Doctor W. W. Keen's letter on the subject. Had I known this, I should have cited the prior mention. In *The Catholic World* for June, there are two interesting editorials on the theme, bringing forward the latest convert, Heywood Broun. It may be necessary to form the "I" club, with *The Catholic World* as President, Doctor Keen as Vice-President, Heywood Broun as Secretary, and "the present writer" as Treasurer. The last would have almost as easy a job as shovelling snow in Timbuctoo. All those who are in favour of this motion will say "I."

In a recent chapter, I called attention to the various evils resulting from the growing fashion of Soloism. Now let me, with less emphasis, indicate its more agreeable aspects. Every one ought to have noticed the steadily increasing use of personalities in banks, railway ticket offices, and other places. Whereas formerly the visitor merely addressed Mr. Anon seated behind his glittering mahogany, or gazed at him through the iron grille where he glared at you in security, now one sees a handsome copper sign

MR. ALLING

and knows that the functionary is actually a human being with a name. This is a feature of

soloism that has everything to recommend it, and nothing against it. But it should be carried further. Every railway train should have posted in each car a legend

THE CONDUCTOR OF THIS TRAIN IS
MR. JOHN MEANS

THE PULLMAN CONDUCTOR IS
MR. HENRY ATKINSON

or whatever their names may be. When I was a child, I never imagined that a railway conductor was a person. I thought he was a machine in uniform which mechanically punched tickets. I thought he was born in his uniform and slept in it. Had I chanced to see him in mufti, laughing and talking off duty, I should have been astounded. Even now I think we take functionaries, policemen, professors, conductors, etc., much too routinely. Strange as it may seem, they are human beings. A year ago, on an infernally hot day, I entered a crowded dining-car, and as I passed the dining-car conductor, I remarked casually, "This must be a pretty hard day for you; and as for those boys in the kitchen, I certainly am sorry for them." To my surprise, he fell on my neck and wept. "Say," he cried, "I don't know your name or who you are, but I *want* to know! You are the only person to-day who has shown me or my

men the slightest consideration. I have received nothing but kicks and complaints of all kinds, and I shall never forget you as long as I live." And yet I had only "passed the time of day." It was because I had regarded him and his men, not as automata, but as human beings.

In speaking of *persons* as distinguished from functionaries, the English have a custom which, although it may have no belittling significance, rather infuriates me. They never say, "That is the milkman, or the postman," but "That's the *milk*." "That will be the *post*." As though these two human beings had as their sole reason for existence the bringing of milk or letters! No matter how inconsiderate we may be in America, at least we have the grace to call him the milk*man* or the post*man*.

By the way, how amazing it would be, if when a train makes a long stop in the midst of a desolate country, and a passenger had the temerity to ask a uniformed official why, any definite information should be returned!

FINIS

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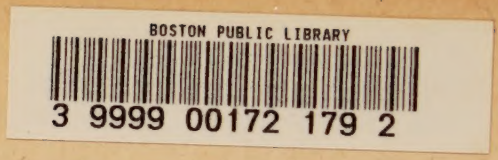

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